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CONTENTS

Govt. Lifts Ban on Fuel & Fishing. . .4
President's Letter to LTTE Leader. 6
President's Balancing Act During Visit to India. 7
Peace Process: Parties Should Agree on Agenda & Time Frame. . .8
Peace Process Rescued From Brink of Disaster. 9
National & International Conditions Ripe for Peace. 10
LTTE Looking for Federal Solution. 13
Chandrika, LTTE and the Tamil Conflict. 15
The Peace Question – Understanding Reality. 16
Misconceptions and Anxieties in a Time of Change. 18
Marxism and Ethnicity. 20
Sub-Continental Scene. 24
Tamil Nadu Newsletter. 25

Tigers Withdraw From Peace Process
Fighting Resumes as Gunboats Are Sunk

21 April, Colombo – The three-and-a-half month military truce between the government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) came to an abrupt and unpredictable end at about 1am on 19 April when two gunboats belonging to the Sri Lankan navy anchored off the Trincomalee harbour were sunk by two squads of suicide 'Sea Tigers' by planting underwater mines on the two vessels. Twelve navy men were killed and twenty one more injured in the attack.

Simultaneously with what the government described as this unprovoked attack, the peace process initiated by President Mrs. Chandrika Kumaratunga came to an end as the Tigers also announced their withdrawal from the process.

There was much hope that the peace process was back on track following the lifting of the four-year ban on the transport to the north of essential items including fuel, and as many felt, the accommodating tone and content of President Kumaratunga's letter of 12 April (see page 6), to the LTTE leader.

The government of President Kumaratunga and the Sri Lankan armed forces would appear to have been completely taken aback by the attack in Trincomalee and its repercussions. The security forces too which have been enjoying a breather during the last three months were caught napping. In a state of exasperation, a senior army officer was quoted as saying, 'We were totally unprepared. They did not even give the seventy-two hours notice of their withdrawal as required under the Declaration of the Cessation of Hostilities. The collapse of the truce and the blowing up of the gunboats accompanied by the Tigers' withdrawal from the peace process is viewed as a near-mortal blow to the President's project for the restoration of peace.

Shortly before the attack, the LTTE leader, Mr. Velupillai Pirabakaran, had despatched a letter to President Mrs. Chandrika Kumaratunga stating that the response of the government on two very important issues, namely the removal of the Pooneryn army camp in the north and the freedom to carry arms by LTTE cadres in the eastern province was not acceptable to the Tigers, and therefore the LTTE was compelled to withdraw from the peace process itself. The contents of the LTTE leader's letter were relayed over the 'Voice of Tigers' on the morning of 19 April after the attack on the gunboats. According to a government spokesman, the Trincomalee attack occurred even before the President had time to absorb the contents of the LTTE leader's letter.

The LTTE leader's letter also said that after more than six months exchange of views between the parties, the solitary positive outcome was the government's decision to lift the economic embargo. But there had been deliberate attempts to slow down the process of implementation, and her letter was evasive, temporising or procrastinating on other issues raised by the LTTE. The government was also exploiting the cessation of hostilities to build up its armed strength which was against the spirit of the agreement.

The initial response of the government appeared to treat the Trincomalee incident as an isolated one and to salvage what was left of the peace process in which it had invested so much. The security forces were ordered not to go on any offensive operations, but to respond only in self defence.

Continued on page 3

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Continued from page 1

While putting the security forces on alert, it also re-imposed an embargo on the transport to the north of 19 items including fuel and fertilisers. A total ban on fishing in northeastern waters was also re-imposed. Claiming that the Trincomalee incident was a setback but not a defeat for the peace process, a government statement said that it would do its utmost to forestall any attempts to provoke the commencement of one more disastrous war. The decision of the LTTE to terminate the cessation of hostilities was in total disregard of the stated aspirations of all sections of the Sri Lankan people. All those who act against the people would, no doubt, be considered enemies of the people. The Tamil people in the North and the East as well as their brethren in the rest of the country have expressed their unshaken faith in the Government's policy and its commitment to achieve peace, the statement added.

Further Incidents

Proving that the Trincomalee attack was not an isolated one as the government's statement hoped, further incidents, including a major assault on an army camp in which thirty seven soldiers were killed, that occurred on subsequent days seem to confirm the fear that Eelam War III had already begun.

Around midnight on Wednesday 19 April, within 24 hours of the Trincomalee incident, there was an outbreak of fighting around the military base at Palaly in the northern Jaffna peninsula. The army claimed that the fighting started when the Tigers began firing mortars and rocket-propelled grenades at the army bunkers located at the perimeter of the base and the army returned fire.

On Friday 21 April, Sri Lankan forces went on the offensive against the LTTE when the navy bombarded and shelled alleged Sea Tiger bases at Nagar Koil along the most northerly point of the Jaffna peninsula. Reports indicate that Gurunagar, coastal village in Jaffna also had come under heavy naval shelling.

The complete ban on fishing around the northern and eastern coast suggested that the navy was going to target the LTTE's naval wing, the Sea Tigers.

As if to confirm that the war has resumed in earnest, around midnight on 21 April, the LTTE launched a full scale surprise assault on a remote army camp near the village of Kattumurivikkulam in the eastern Batticaloa district in which at least thirty-seven soldiers were killed or missing and forty-one injured. Military sources confirmed that the army camp was completely over-run before being later recaptured by army reinforcements following a fierce battle. They also said that at least 14 Tigers were killed out of an attacking force of nearly three hundred strong.

For the first time since the Peoples Alliance Government came to power in August last year, search and arrest operations allegedly aimed at catching 'Tiger operatives' has begun in Colombo. Experience has shown that such operations mean rounding up of mainly young Tamils from hostels and hotels. From 20th April, the police have engaged in a campaign of seeking suspected Tiger operatives and in the process taken into custody over two hundred persons. It is reported that after interrogation, most of those taken into custody who had a valid explanation for their presence in Colombo have been released. These arrests follow government's fears that the LTTE might launch attacks on government installations and commit political assassinations of leading politicians.

Foreign Reaction

Reactions from foreign countries to the resumption of fighting has been quick and unprecedented. The United States would appear to have put its full diplomatic weight behind the government in Colombo. In a toughly worded statement, the State Department in Washington deplored the attack on the naval gunboats and said that the Tamil Tigers would have to bear the responsibility if the peace process ultimately broke down. The statement also asked the government to persevere with its efforts to find a political solution and urged the LTTE to rejoin the search for peace.

The European Union Presidency, representing most of the western European nations, in condemning the LTTE's decision to resume hostilities as unjustified urged the LTTE to give a positive response to Colombo's peace initiative and start negotiations for a political settlement of the conflict.

Canada also joined the others in condemning the LTTE for breaking the truce. The Foreign Affairs Minister urged the LTTE to the pursuit of a negotiated settlement.

Local Reactions

The turn of events has given the opportunity to those sceptics in the south and even among some Tamil groups who doubted the genuineness of the Tigers to say: 'We told you so'. They have been pointing to the reluctance of the Tigers to engage in political talks to end the ethnic problem and the preconditions that they were imposing before such talks take place. The EPDP and PLOTE, two Tamil groups represented in Parliament, but having little influence over the course of events in the northeast, have been saying that the main reason for the LTTE wanting their cadres to carry weapons in the east is to forcibly bring the east also under their military control as they have done in the Jaffna peninsula.

The Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) has called upon the government and the LTTE to stop the fighting and resume peace talks stating that the escalating of the conflict would inevitably lead to incalculable human suffering.

The Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) has called upon the government to announce and implement constitutional reforms, including a substantive package of devolutionary measures, irrespective of the resumption of hostilities by the LTTE. The SLMC leader, Mr. M.H.M. Ashraff, who is a cabinet minister, said that the government would not react to LTTE provocations in a hasty manner, and hoped that the Tigers would not want to return to full scale war.

The EPRLF, another Tamil group, has also called on the government to publish without delay its new power sharing arrangement and proceed with its peace process with or without the LTTE.

Father S.J. Emmanuel, the Vicar General of the Catholic Church in Jaffna now in Colombo for a Catholic Convention, who is said to be in regular and close contact with the LTTE leadership, sought to put forward the LTTE's side of the argument. In an interview with the BBC's Colombo correspondent, the Vicar General said that there was growing disappointment among the people that the matters that were agreed during the first and second round of talks had not been implemented.

When asked: 'But even if the government was dragging its feet, isn't it an extremely excessive reaction to break off peace talks altogether and go back to war? Won't the people of Jaffna suffer more through the resumption of hostilities than they would through the delayed implementation of some of the concessions the government earlier announced? Fr. Emmanual said: 'It is not a positive wilful option for war. It is a position to which we have been pushed. We are not wilfully selecting war. We are only saying that there is no meaning in proceeding with such talks which do not have the implementary side to it. If it is merely talking and talking, and there is no implementation, then there is no sense in it, that is what the Tigers meant'.

FOURTH ROUND OF PEACE TALKS

Govt. Lifts Ban on Fuel & Fishing Peace Process Back on Track?

After almost five years of embargo, all types of fuel, including petrol and diesel, began moving towards and into the Jaffna peninsula as from Saturday 15 April putting into effect President Chandrika Kumaratunga's decision to lift the embargo. The remaining restrictions on fishing in the northern waters also have been removed. The decision of the government has been conveyed in a four page letter dated 12 April to the LTTE leader, V. Pirabhakaran. (See page 6).

Political observers believe that the hitherto faltering peace process initiated by President Kumaratunga could gain new momentum if the Tigers also reciprocated now that the government has conceded two of their main demands almost in full which the Tigers described as affecting the day to day problems of northern Tamils.

There were two other conditions that the LTTE wanted the government to agree to before they would enter into negotiations on the political issues. The first was that the army camp at Pooneryn should be totally removed although the government had previously unilaterally moved it 600 metres away from the Pooneryn-Sangupiddy route that connects Jaffna and the mainland. The other was that they would not agree to the functioning of Monitoring Committees headed by foreign personnel until the present cessation of hostilities was converted into a permanent ceasefire. The government has agreed that these matters could be discussed in the next round of talks and in any case could be reviewed in three months.

Fourth Round

The lifting of the embargo on fuel and restrictions on fishing was a direct result of the fourth round of talks held between delegations of the government and the LTTE on 10/11 April. The government delegation which travelled to the northern Jaffna peninsula for the talks comprised Presidential Secretary Kusumsiri Balapatabendi, Anglican Bishop Kenneth Fernando, Charles Abeysekera (Chairman of Official Languages Commission and President of the Movement for Inter-Racial Justice and Equality), university don Dr. Jayadeva Uyangoda, Brigadier Siri Peiris and Navy Captain Rajaratne. The LTTE delegation was composed of its political section leader Tamil Chelvam, Ravi and Dominique.

After the first day of talks during which, according to reliable reports, not much progress was made, three members of the government delegation returned to Colombo, while Bishop Kenneth Fernando, Charles Abeysekera and Jayadeva Uyangoda remained overnight in Jaffna for further talks.

It is understood that both sides have agreed to set up three committees to discuss (a) the political issues with a view to resolving the ethnic problem, (b) rehabilitation, reconstruction and development of the northeast, and (c) upgrading the present cessation of hostilities into a permanent ceasefire.

There were fears that the fourth round of talks would be cancelled when two soldiers were shot dead outside the Palaly army base in violation of the truce between the government and the LTTE. Although there was general suspicion that the shooting was carried out by the Tigers, they denied any responsibility, and the talks went ahead as scheduled.

When fighting resumed between government forces and the LTTE in June 1990, the then government imposed a swingeing economic embargo prohibiting the transport to the north of more than 80 items which include many which can be described as essential to the life of the civilian population. During the past few months, the present government lifted the ban over all items except 12 or so items which included fuel. The LTTE insisted as a precondition for political talks that the embargo must be totally lifted.

The only items that remain on the prohibited list are Arms/Ammunition, Explosives/Pyrotechnics, Remote Control Devices, Penlight Batteries, Binoculars, Telescopes, Compasses and Cloth material resembling army uniforms.

Though the Tigers have not officially responded yet (17 April) to President Kumaratunga's communication addressed to the LTTE leader, reports indicate that there is much renewed hope and expectation that the peace process is now back on track. The President has also suggested that the next round of talks be held between 5 and 10 May.

War of Words

Until the fourth round of talks and the government's latest decision, there was widespread concern that the peace process was drifting into an acrimonious war of words with charges and counter-charges ultimately leading to the LTTE setting a deadline even to pull out of the peace process.

The third round of talks between the government and the LTTE took place on 14 January and despite some ameliorative measures providing some measure of relief to the people of the north, there was not much movement on the substantive issues. Almost three months later, the fourth round of talks occurred on 10/11 April. This delay in itself was demonstrative of the fact that the peace process was not proceeding at a pace as anticipated at the beginning, and encountered difficulties that were not anticipated.

One encouraging fact was that the declaration of Cessation of Hostilities which came into effect on 8 January has, by and large, held in spite of allegations of various violations. However, the Monitoring Committees with foreign participation were not allowed to function as stipulated in the declaration. Their functioning had become a matter of dispute between the parties. The LTTE leader in his letter dated 25 February said that he was astonished that the government 'was not showing any keenness to extend the present temporary cessation of hostilities into a permanent durable ceasefire.' The LTTE sought to link the non-functioning of the Monitoring Committees to the absence of a formal ceasefire. 'This has in turn resulted in delays in getting the foreign heads of Monitoring Committees to begin assuming their functions', the LTTE leader said in his letter.

The government's position on the LTTE's suggestion of a permanent ceasefire as expressed in its statement on 6 March was that it could be considered once the 'Committees of Investigation into Violation of the Terms of Cessation of Hostilities' (Peace Committees) began to function effectively. The LTTE unconditionally agreed to the setting up of these Committees on 3 January, but had introduced additional conditions like fishing rights and free movement in northern waters and permission for LTTE cadres to move freely while carrying weapons in the east. These committees were set up to monitor violations of the terms of the cessation

of hostilities which came into effect on 8 January, and the LTTE had obstructed their functioning. Because of the inability of the Monitoring Committees to function, there was no independent body to look into alleged violation of the cessation of hostilities agreement.

Four Conditions

The LTTE, on the other hand, alleged that the government had failed to implement in practice what it had agreed during the first three rounds of talks. It also set out four conditions – total lifting of the embargo on the transport of all items to Jaffna; the removal of the Pooneryn army camp, the removal of restrictions on fishing in northern waters; and the conversion of the cessation of hostilities into a permanent ceasefire. In addition, the Tigers also wanted the government to allow its cadres to move freely, while being armed, in the eastern province.

The government for its part lifted the embargo on most of the items except those which would be used to enhance the LTTE's military capability. It also relaxed some restrictions on fishing in the north and moved the army camp at Pooneryn six hundred metres away from the causeway. By this unilateral move, the government was hoping that the LTTE could be persuaded to enter into talks on the political issues.

The LTTE asserted that government's refusal to accede in full to its demands which related to the day to day problems of the people of the north reflected its lack of sincerity. On the other hand the government spokesman alleged that the Tigers were putting forward preconditions to be fulfilled while not agreeing to set a date for political talks with a view to arriving at an overall settlement leading to peace.

Upsetting Timetable

The delay caused even in the commencement of talks on the political issues relating to the ethnic conflict would appear to have certainly upset the government's time table. The reason for the obvious urgency of the government to commence talks with the LTTE on the political and constitutional issues involved in the ethnic conflict arises from the fact that the government has set 15 July this year as the date by which the Parliamentary Select Committee on Constitutional Reform has to submit its report. Besides dealing with all aspects of constitutional reform, including the abolition of the executive presidency and changes in the electoral system, the Select Committee is also vested with the task of finalising the framework for the resolution of the ethnic conflict. Hence, any amendments to the present Constitution required to give effect to any settlement reached on the ethnic question also have to be finalised by 15 July.

The government believed that the proposal to reform the constitution would attract much popular support. Therefore, once the totality of the constitutional reform package, including provisions relating to the solution of the ethnic conflict, is finalised, the government's objective is to seek approval by way of a referendum. Many well-meaning commentators believe that a legislative formula for the solution of the ethnic conflict forming part of a total package for constitutional reform is more likely to receive the approval of the people at a referendum than if such a formula were to be put to them as a separate issue by itself. It is precisely for this reason that the government seems to be keen on beginning talks with the LTTE on the political issues at the same time as issues relating to what is perceived as the day to day problems of the people.

Violations of Truce

Meanwhile, on the basis of alleged intelligence reports that nearly 70 Tiger cadres had been brought into Colombo to assassinate prominent politicians and attack important state installations in the event talks collapsed, selective search and arrest operations have been undertaken. According to CID sources, one such plan is to drive a bowser load of explosives to the Sapugaskanda oil refinery which would lead to a major catastrophe.

The recent capture of four Indian fishing trawlers by the LTTE in the Palk Straits also raised suspicion among the Sri Lankan navy circles. The Tigers had reportedly retained three vessels while the crew of all the boats wee put on board the fourth vessel which was released on the high seas. Navy circles fear that as in the past, the Tigers might seek to deceive the navies of both countries in an effort to smuggle weapons into the north by using the captured fishing trawlers.

Allegations that the Tigers were engaged in collecting money through intimidation and enforced conscription of young men and women also continued. It also has been reported that Thiyagarajah, the TELO leader of Palugamam in the East was shot dead by the LTTE. The LTTE district leader for Kaluwanchikudi had walked into Thiyagarajah's house with four other cadres and shot Thiyagarajah. Again 28-year-old Muthusamy Anusha Moorthy, a TELO member, of Chenkalady in the eastern province was shot dead by three gunmen who entered his house.

While the LTTE denied any allegations of violations of the truce, in turn they accused the security forces of committing violations against LTTE cadre in the east.

The Deadline

The LTTE took everyone by surprise when it issued almost an ultimatum that it would pull out of the peace process unless its demands were met. In a letter dated 16 March addressed to President Kumaratunga, the LTTE leader Pirabhakaran stated if 'a favourable response is not received from you before 28 March '95, we will be compelled to make a painful decision as to whether to continue with the peace process or not.'

The three issues which the LTTE leader identified as needing urgent settlement were:

(a) The opening of the Pooneryn route with the removal of the army camp;

(b) The lifting of the embargo on all essential items; and

(c) The withdrawal of restrictions on fishing in northern waters.

The government and the President were completely taken aback by the turn of events as the already faltering peace process in which they had invested a lot of political capital was near collapse with the LTTE's threat to pull out. However, the government insisted that it would do everything possible to sustain the peace process, without treating 28 March as a deadline or an ultimatum from the LTTE. Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister, Lakshman Kadirgamar, did not doubt that the peace process would go on, and stated that the government's stand on the LTTE's demands was 'not inflexible', and 'the government will not be panicked into breaking the peace talks'. 'Despite setbacks and misunderstandings, we will not deflect from the path of finding a just solution but it will not be peace at any cost'.

However the danger of collapse of the peace process was averted by the timely visit to Jaffna by the Anglican Bishop Kenneth Fernando, Mr. Charles Abeysekera (President of the Movement for Inter-Racial Justice and Equality and Chairman of the Official Languages Commission) and the university don Dr. Jayadeva Uyangoda who had gone there in connection with the release of 15 policemen who had

Continued on page 7

President Kumaratunga's Letter to LTTE Leader Pirabhakaran

The Government's delegation met with the LTTE for the fourth round of talks in Jaffna on the 10th and 11th of April, 1985. The discussions took place in a cordial atmosphee. They focussed on four major issues.

The decisions of the government on the matters discussed are set out in a letter addressed already by President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga to Mr. V. Pirabhakaran, leader of the LTTE.

The following is the text of the letter dated 12 April:

We have considered the issues that were referred to in your letter of 6th April 1985; these also formed the subject matter of the talks that were held between our delegations on the 10th and 11th of April in Jaffna.

I was glad to be informed that Mr. Thamil Selvan had, in the course of his opening remarks, stated that the date referred to in your letter was not to be construed as an ultimatum but as an indication of a time frame within which decisions already arrived at were to be implemented.

I will now set out the four issues referred to and the actions we propose to take and/or our reactions. We are of the view that these issues vary fundamentally in character. Considerable progress has been made with regard to some of these issues and we now propose to take further positive decisions designed to ameliorate the living conditions of the people in the north. However, it is evident that other issues have military repercussions; these issues will therefore have to be addressed in the context of progress to be made with regard to political discussions leading to a negotiated end to the war.

1. The Embargo:

Only the following items will now remain on the list of goods prohibited for transport to the north:

Arms/Ammunition
Explosives/Pyrotechnics
Remote Control Devices
Binoculars
Telescopes
Compasses
Cloth material resembling army uniforms
Penlight Batteries.

All other goods can be freely transported to the north.

The announcement of this decision will be made on the 13th April and thereafter a gazette will be immediately issued containing the list of 8 items still on the embargo list.

We have looked into your statements that earlier decisions on the embargo have not been fully implemented; we note that the free flow of items removed from the embargo list has been hampered by some obstacles. We have already taken and will continue to take firm action to ensure that all such obstacles are speedily removed and that goods can be transported to the north without impediment. As part of these efforts, we will also set up at all check points in and around Vavuniya civilian committees to whom any complaints can be made and immediate redress obtained.

2. Restrictions on Fishing

The restrictions on fishing, which were relaxed considerably by me on an earlier occasion, will be removed, taking into consideration your suggestions made to our delegation, so that fishing can be carried on at any time with only the following exceptions:

i. From Devil's Point to Thalaimannar fishing will be permitted only up to 5 nautical miles from the shore.

ii. Fishing will not be permitted within an area 1 mile either side along the coast and 2 nautical miles seawards from all security forces camps on the coast.

iii. Fishing will not be permitted in all bays, harbours and estuaries along the coast. Any problems arising with regard to the effect of this exception in the east should be discussed, as agreed with you, at a local level.

In the seas from Thondamannar to Devil's Point and in the Jaffna lagoon, fishing will be continued as at present.

The restrictions that remain are the minimum consonant with current conditions. The restriction on fishing in the seas from Devil's Point to Thalaimannar will be reviewed in three month's time within which period, the government will make all efforts to conclude arrangements to permit fishing within Sri Lanka's territorial waters.

In removing the embargo on goods for civilian use including diesel and petrol and in removing restrictions on fishing to the minimum we have taken those steps that are necessary to alleviate the difficulties facing people in the north and to bring back to a state of normality civilian life. We are both agreed that this should be our joint first objective. I hope that with these measures and their implementation, we are well on our way to its achievement.

I shall now go on to the two remaining matters.

3. Pooneryn Camp

You have asked for the removal of the Pooneryn camp on the purported ground that the Sangupidy Road cannot be opened up for civilian use without this. We have withdrawn the camp perimeter by 600 metres and have given an undertaking to place no checks on the road and to allow unobstructed use of the road by civilians. We shall implement this.

However, it is not possible for us to take a decision on the removal of the camp at this time. The camp has military significance and it is also our understanding that under the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement, the status quo should be maintained and that neither side should attempt to affect the other's military capability. Nevertheless, conscious that the peace and normality we are striving to achieve must ultimately mean the reduction of military presence, we will keep this question under constant review and revert to it in three months time or when political talks are under way, whichever is earlier.

4. The Movement of Armed LTTE Cadres in the East.

We believe that this is a matter that should be negotiated within the context of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement. We are ready to discuss this immediately with you, negotiate an annex to the COH Agreement to include this as well as any other matters that are mutually deemed necessary, and to implement fully the conditions of this agreement including the activation of the peace committees envisaged therein.

We believe that the action we have taken or propose to take on the four issues raised will be satisfactory to you and provide a firm basis for the continuation of peace talks until they reach a conclusion in the resolution of the ethnic conflict.

In this context we suggest that the next round of talks centre on:

i. the negotiation of an annex to the COH Agreement,

ii. the finalization of residual mat-

Continued on page 7

President's Balancing Act During Indian Visit

Rita Sebastian, Colombo

The visit of President Chandrika Kumaratunga to India, her first official visit since assuming office as Executive President, is considered a personal triumph for her.

President Kumaratunga is said to have charmed many of the leading Indian politicians whom she met, as well as the hard bitten press corps. Her meetings with the India International centre coterie of self-styled Indian opinion makers is also said to have gone extremely well.

President Kumaratunga is said to have come across as a person genuinely committed to peace.

It must be recalled that most of the visits undertaken by the leaders of the previous regime to India were marred by suspicion, and in some instances, protocol lapses.

The crux of President Kumaratunga's visit was the tricky question of how to handle the issue of Tiger leader Vellupillai Prabhakaran which looms threateningly over Indo-Lanka relations. It is a strange thought but true, that Prabhakaran who is hardly seen in public, should so obsess all discussion on current Indo-Lanka relations.

Former President Ranasinghe Premadasa made enemies in Delhi for seeking to befriend Prabhakaran at the cost of Indo-Lanka relations. Premadasa's thesis was quite simply that India was at the root of Tamil militancy in Sri Lanka. Pluck out this root and all will be well, seemed to be his reasoning. What is more, his peace offensive was hinged on the risky proposition that the LTTE would be grateful to him for having saved them from the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) and its machinations. Premadasa in fact delighted in snubbing India during his 13-month peace parley with the LTTE.

President Chandrika Kumaratunga however has handled India, during her analogous phase of negotiations with the LTTE with much greater sensitivity. She has explained her compulsions, both political and economic, in negotiating with the LTTE. They are after all the only credible force and as De Gaulle once said 'We must talk to those who shoot at our soldiers'.

There is reason to believe that the cardinal fault of the controversial Indo-Lanka Accord of 1987 was the exclusion of the LTTE. The LTTE was not a signatory to the Accord which presented it with an excuse for not abiding by it. President Kumaratunga will not like to repeat history and therefore she has sought political accommodation with Prabhakaran. The logic of President Kumaratunga's argument cannot be rebutted. However there is a huge complication, namely the Rajiv Gandhi assassination alleged to have been the handiwork of the LTTE. And Prabhakaran has become a 'wanted' man.

There are powerful lobbies both in Tamil Nadu and Delhi, who are determined to 'get' Prabhakaran and these lobbies have an inspiration in Gandhi's widow, Sonia, who has emerged as a force to be reckoned with in Indian politics.

President Kumaratunga had to therefore perform a balancing act to obtain Indian support for the peace process. Equally on the other hand she had to assure Indian authorities that she would not shield wanted men from the workings of justice.

It is a tribute to her political skills that she has obtained comfort on both these issues. India has supported the peace process and on the Prabhakaran extradition India has accepted the fact that extradition would only arise when Prabhakaran is available to Sri Lankan authorities.

Sri Lanka must hope that India can be persuaded to continue with its present non-interventionist role. Others argue that this is not the critical issue at all. The critical issue is really whether the peace talks with the LTTE will lead to a final settlement, or whether it will collapse in disarray. In either scenario India's tacit acquiescence, if not active support will be required.

Continued from page 6

ters such as the Joint Authority on Rehabilitation and Reconstruction so that work may be expedited and,

iii. the shape of future negotiations.

We propose that these talks resume on any days between the 6th and 10th of May 1995,

Yours sincerely,

Continued from page 5

been in LTTE custody since June 1990. The policemen had engaged in a fast demanding that the government should take steps to obtain their release. The fasting policemen were released and transported to Colombo following talks between the LTTE and three intermediaries who went from Colombo.

Back on Track

In addition to dealing with the release of the police prisoners, it would seem that the three intermediaries, with the consent of President Kumaratunga, had engaged in talks with the LTTE leadership which had 'helped to clear some of the misunderstandings' between the government and the LTTE. It would appear that LTTE had agreed that 28 March was not to be treated as a deadline, but as a time frame within which they expected a response from the government. On his return to Colombo, Bishop Kenneth Fernando said, 'My assessment is that the LTTE and the people of Jaffna are eager for peace. Our delegation endeavoured to get the peace process back on track and we believe that our efforts have achieve some success'.

It was during this time the editor of *Ravaya*, a Sinhala language weekly, also visited Jaffna and had extensive talks with LTTE leaders including their spokesman Anton Balasingham. On his return, he indicated that the LTTE would continue to take part in the peace process and that they might not insist on the total removal of the army camp at Pooneryn.

Govt.'s Moves

In a letter dated 24 March, the President informed the LTTE leader that the government was prepared to lift the embargo on fuel and restrictions on fishing. The government suggested to the LTTE that its delegation would be willing to visit Jaffna for the fourth round of talks during the first week of April. The government also would appear to have suggested that the talks could take place on a multi-track basis, with three groups or committees comprising negotiators from both parties holding parallel discussions on (a) reconstruction, rehabilitation and development, (b) political issues (c) strengthening the cessation of hostilities, and requested the LTTE to indicate as to how the political talks could be structured.

Mr. Pirabhakaran, the LTTE leader responded by his letter dated 28 March extending the 'deadline' of 28 March,

Continued on page 26

Peace Process: Parties Should Agree on Agenda & Time-frame

Rita Sebastian from Colombo interviewed well known constitutional lawyer and Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) Member of Parliament, Dr. Neelam Tiruchelvam, who answered questions ranging from the peace process to devolution:

Q: *Do you think it is the end of the road for the peace process?*

A: No I don't. You have got to understand that the peace process is a complex exercise for two important reasons.

Firstly, we have to overcome the legacy of distrust, and the legacy of destruction which has overshadowed the relations between the northeast and the rest of the country.

The second is the logistical constraint which makes the pursuit of peace in Sri Lanka very different from that in the Middle East or Northern Ireland.

There is a geographical isolation, and the fact that direct contacts between the two sides have been limited and one has had to resort to communication through letters.

Now despite these two broad constraints, I think the peace process is alive.

The cessation of hostilities agreement worked out in the early part of January has held for more than two months and that is a significant achievement of the peace process.

Q: *The general feeling in the country is that the talks are deadlocked. How do you think one can get out of the situation?*

A: I think what needs to be done is for the two sides to come to an understanding with regard to the actual agenda for discussion and the sequence within which that agenda will be pursued, and also whether it will be possible to work out some specific timeframe for addressing the various issues. The process as you know has taken place amidst many difficulties and no one can really expect a dramatic breakthrough within such a short time. But I believe that the achievements so far have been significant and we have to approach the process with a measure of optimism.

Q: *Do you think it is time the government made its devolution package to resolve the conflict public?*

A: I don't think it necessary at this stage because devolution is one of the issues which form part of the new constitutional reform exercise and the chapter on devolution was left out of the first draft on constitutional reform.

This position was clearly explained to most political parties, that they felt the devolution issues should initially be addressed in the peace talks.

It will be appropriate to let the issues define themselves in the course of the peace talks and subsequently if there is significant progress on these issues to try and express that progress in the constitutional reform exercise. This I think is looking at it from a practical political perspective.

Q: *What in your opinion are the minimum demands of the Tamils?*

A: If you look at the proposals placed before the Select Committee of parliament the issues relate essentially to the political and constitutional framework for the sharing of power between the northeast and the rest of the country.

The second issue relates to problems of equality in terms of language, and institutional arrangements which ensure that when there are disputes between the centre and the province that these disputes will be addressed in a manner which is consistent with the spirit and substance of the constitutional framework for the sharing of power between the northeast and the rest of the country.

The second issue relates to problems of equality in terms of language, and equality of opportunities.

The third issue relates to institutional arrangements which ensure that when there are disputes between the centre and the province that these disputes will be addressed in a manner which is consistent with the spirit and substance of the constitutional framework.

And fourthly some assurance that whatever political framework is agreed on, it will not be subsequently abrogated or amended in a manner detrimental to the Tamils and Muslims.

So there are four broad areas which I think need to be addressed in an overall political solution.

Q: *In your opinion did the Indo-Lanka Accord of 1987 devolve substantial power on the provincial councils.*

A: There are many problems with the devolutionary framework in the Indo-Lanka Accord.

The first is the constitutional framework.

The second is in regard to the distribution of power between the centre and the provinces.

There is a question of 'national policy' on all the devolved subjects which was vested in the centre.

So under the guise of national policy you in effect took away with the right hand what you gave with the left hand.

In a number of instances an erosion took place in the devolutionary arrangement.

And finally there is extreme dependence of the province on the centre with regard to financing.

So the changes which we are thinking in terms of devolution are not marginal changes or modest changes, they envisage the fundamental reconstruction of the distribution of powers to the provinces.

And we further envisage a more effective mechanism for ensuring that the centre does not intrude or encroach upon the powers of the provinces.

Q: *The sticking point in the whole devolution exercise seems to be the northeast merger. What is the TULF position on the merger?*

A: When TULF President Mr. M. Sivasithamparam went before the Select Committee he put forward the party position which is the linking of the Tamil majority areas of the northern and eastern provinces.

In making these proposals however he recognised that there maybe firstly the need to make special arrangements for the Muslims, and also consider some adjustment of the boundaries in the northeast.

Q: *Why did the TULF decide to support the Peoples Alliance government?*

A: There are three key elements in the PA approach which we found acceptable. Firstly we believed that there was a need to have direct political contact between the government and the LTTE. Secondly we felt that there has to be a peaceful resolution of the conflict and there was no alternative to this, and thirdly the PA had agreed to extensive devolution as a basis for a political solution.

Peace Process Rescued From the Brink of Collapse

Last week saw the peace initiative of President Chandrika Kumaratunga being rescued from the brink. As events unfolded towards the weekend, the most crucial and vital aspect of the PA-LTTE effort to resolve the ethnic conflict became apparent. Both sides evidently were prepared to recognise and make concessions to some degree to the specific pressures each side has to reckon with. This trend has to be strengthened and supported by all who genuinely desire an end to the suffering of the people in the north-east.

The following is the story by **TARAKI** of the near breakdown of the peace process, which was saved by the weekend.

TARAKI was in Jaffna and a witness to the events.

The peace process was almost on the verge of collapsing on March 28. Few in Colombo's decision making political circles were aware of the gravity of the situation which had been fundamentally brought about by the letter sent by the government to the LTTE's leadership on March 9. The letter among other things, listed the issues which the Tigers insist have to be sorted out before substantial negotiations on a political solution can begin and stated that those issues can be resolved only within the 'framework of an established and durable peace'.

Now, this position simply meant that the further lifting of the embargo, further lifting the ban on fishing on the northeast coast, a ceasefire, removing the Pooneryn army camp etc., could be discussed only after a political solution is negotiated and implemented. The government also required the Tigers to give a date in early April to begin political discussions.

The LTTE was already complaining that the government was submitting to the interests of the army and hence dragging its feet on resolving many issues which it had agreed upon earlier. The government letter corroborated their suspicion when it referred to issues raised by the LTTE as matters involving national security. Even a brief perusal of this epistle would reveal that the last thing on the mind of the person who drafted it was diplomacy and consistency.

The writer having stipulated that the issues involved could be resolved only within the framework of an established and durable peace, goes on to say in the next paragraph that discussions on the same issues could take place parallel to negotiations on a political package. The text of the March 9 letter barely conceals the hands of an amateur who has been foisted into an intricate and unfamiliar situation.

The LTTE, however, was in no mood to take the letter lightly. To them it was an unequivocal message from Chandrika that she was not prepared to resolve anymore of the issues raised by them in the interests of the army and that they have to submit to political discussions. This in their view was tantamount to pure coercion. The Tiger high command ordered its military units to go on alert. A decision was taken to deliver an ultimatum to the government. I understand that the date for the deadline was initially fixed for March 20.

Yet when Dr. Jaydeva Uyangoda, Charles Abayasekara and Bishop Kenneth Fernando went to Jaffna, things appeared normal except that LTTE was hardening its stand on the peace process. The war like preparations were not very visible. I understood that at a discussion they held with Thamil Selvan an unsuccessful attempt was made to tone down the effect of the letter's contents.

The LTTE, however, was more keen to take the Uyan-Charlie-Kenneth team to the house in Jaffna town where the policemen were on fast in order to release two of them to the Bishop. Later in the evening I saw them preparing to leave with little to keep the peace process on track except perhaps the two policemen who had been released to the ICRC In deference to the Bishop's mission to Jaffna.

Meanwhile, Victor Ivan, (editor of *Ravaya*), who was warmly welcomed and treated with due respect by the LTTE in Jaffna, had lengthy discussions with Thamil Selvan and Balasingham on problems connected to the peace talks.

However the Tiger leadership sent the ultimatum and began making preparations to face the army. Prabhakaran and most of his key military commanders had already moved out of the peninsula. Thamil Selvan also left Jaffna on March 19 to an undisclosed location in the Wanni.

The headline of the LTTE's organ which appeared four days later was 'Will Eelam War Three Begin?' This was a clear indication of the LTTE's thinking. The lead story said: 'Whether the fighting will start is the question that has arisen in everyone's mind. The LTTE-government peace talks have failed as a result of the position taken up by Chandrika refusing to resolve the day to day problems of the Tamil people. As a result of which a situation has been brought about in which the war can begin any time. . . . The crucial historical responsibility of deciding whether it is going to be war or peace is today in the hands of Chandrika. Is she going to start the war, or is she going to continue with the peace talks?

'That she should do the needful to continue the peace talks is the earnest desire of the Tamil people. Chandrika assumed power promising to remove all the burdens and hardships which previous governments had imposed on the Tamil people. But she did not give priority to the interests of the Tamils as she promised to do – she attempted to make decisions giving priority to the interests of the military. . . .

'However when taking decisions she must take into account the fact that the Sinhala people who voted her into power did not give her a mandate to give priority to military interests. Thus far no Sinhala leader could think truly of finding a peaceful solution to the ethnic problem nor did they act in that belief. This tradition seems to be taking hold of her as well. This is why she is adopting a hard line in the manner aimed at putting a stop to the peace process. Nevertheless the entreaty of the Tamil people is that she should give up this idea of making blood flow and give peace talks a chance. We call upon Madam (this seems to be only approximate to the Tamil "Ammaiyaar") Chandrika not to begin Eelam War Three by giving priority to the views of the chauvinists and militarists'.

The paper said that in a few days it was going to be known whether it was going to be war or peace. The editorial of the *Viduthalai Pulihal* was quite harsh. It argued that the view of some southern intellectuals that she is reacting to pressure from the army was not acceptable. If she could remove some commanders (?) and order investigations against them then it is a fallacy, according to the editorial, to say that she has to take into account the pressure from the military brass.

The big cartoon above the headline shows her telling a person who informs her 'they want a reply before the 28'

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 9

that preparations are under way for sending the answer pointing to the army making arrangements for war.

By Thursday it was obvious to many in Jaffna that another round of bitter fighting was imminent. The LTTE had decided to close the north official and unofficial delegations from the south whatever their purpose. The Anglican Bishop – Dr. Uyan – Charlie team which had met with the President on its return and which was ready to leave for Jaffna with Mr. Balapatabendi was stopped. The Tigers said 'we have made our position clear. It's of no use coming to argue the government's case'.

The foreign heads of the monitoring committees who were also scheduled to leave for Jaffna that week were politely asked to postpone their journey. On Friday Maran, a young but shrewd Tiger attached to the LTTE's political headquarters, appeared in a shirt normally worn by cadres in military service. He was in high spirits. 'I do not know whether I will be around when you come back next' he said. Thamil Selvan's polite assistant Sutha was equally earnest 'Our leader has carefully examined everything and set this deadline. We all stand by him and are all prepared to lay down our lives. The government is treating the matter lightly. Chandrika has gone off to India while the future of the ethnic question hangs in the balance as March 28 approaches. After that the chances for peace would be extremely remote' he said while driving us towards Kilaly. My friend Nandana Weeraratne who was in the back seat was getting a bit worried. his knowledge of Tamil is quite good and has many friends in north.

Hence he had got a clear idea of what was going on. The LTTE's position on March 24 was quite tough. The government had to make an official announcement on issues raised by them in their last letter, otherwise they would shut the doors on the peace process. Thamil Selvan said:

'We have twentyfive thousand fighters in our organisation today to win our rights on our own'. He added that the situation was deteriorating in the east and things were getting difficult there. It seems that the LTTE believes that Chandrika is insisting on an early date in April for talks on a political package because she has to convince the aid consortium soon that the large sum of money promised for the reconstruction and development of the northeast could be granted in view of forging an established and durable peace. If they were to agree to Chandrika's request for a date without getting her to resolve any of the issues raised by them it would in their view be tantamount to yielding to coercion.

The UNP had imposed the ban on fishing, enforced an economic embargo on the north and cut off all access routes to the peninsula in order to coerce the LTTE to submit militarily and if necessary, politically. Therefore in the LTTE's view agreeing to a date on political talks while all these are still in force would help her achieve with little effort what the UNP could not achieve for many years – in other words she gets donor country backing and money while keeping all the means of military coercion gained and consolidated by the armed forces under the UNP regime.

'I am sure that the government understands all this clearly. It might be one reason that March 28 crisis was smoothly overcome, at least temporarily. The LTTE, I think, also understands that it should not push her too far on some issues despite their public pronouncements'.

The most crucial and vital aspect of the PA-LTTE effort to resolve the ethnic conflict is that both sides evidently are prepared to recognise and to make concessions to some degree to the specific pressures which each side has to reckon with. This trend has to be strengthened and supported by all who genuinely desire an end to the suffering of the people in the north-east.

(Courtesy of *Sunday Island*, 2.4.95).

National and International Conditions Ripe for End to Conflict

by M. Wasantha Raja, Chairman, Rupavahini

The successive elections in Sri-Lanka have clearly demonstrated that progressive, politically conscious social forces are being unleashed in a powerful way. Indeed, the present government has been pushed into power by these forces and now an enormous potential for radical change in the country has emerged.

I strongly believe that the climate is such that new visions of forward thinking people in society can be realised if handled with patience and tact.

The results in the parliamentary elections held in August have signalled a new chapter in Sri-Lankan politics. Whatever the hiccups and ups and downs that may occur, some irreversible trends have clearly emerged.

For one, the perception of the war among Sri-Lankan people (particularly Sinhala people) has radically shifted.

Also, people's determination to defend democracy and press freedom has been powerfully demonstrated.

In spite of the most sinister efforts by the darkest forces in Sri-Lanka to whip up racism and war sentiments in the most distasteful manner, the overwhelming majority in the country gave a clear mandate to the Chandrika leadership to proceed with the peace effort.

This significant change in people's perception, I believe, is part of an international trend being carved and slowly gathering momentum. Recent developments in South Africa and the Middle East, particularly, have given hopeful signals that civil wars of the previous decade can effectively change course.

On the one hand, sections within the political establishments of these countries realised that endless fighting would merely culminate in economic and political ruin. Liberation organisations, on the other hand, began to acknowledge that political confrontation could be much more fruitful than being bogged down in military and terrorist confrontations.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, developments like these in other parts of the world couldn't generate the same impact. International trends could never gather momentum as they can in this day and age, with the advance of information technology. This is because it's possible, like never before, to learn and to learn quickly from the experiences of others.

So, in Sri-Lanka at the present time, the powerful social forces that have been unleashed are guided just as much by world developments as by national factors.

It is important, I think, to view the current situation in Sri-Lanka in terms of a 'transition' period. The People's Alliance government, led by a charismatic lady with modern views and attitudes, was pushed into power by progressive social forces in the country in democratically held elections. But, although new faces walked

into the parliament, the same establishment, the same armed forces (saddled with old ideas, old attitudes and old working methods) remained intact.

The result has been that the present government has been caught betwen the conservative and progressive elements within the country. This explains why it often finds itself lagging behind the mass movement in Sri-Lanka but at the same time regularly responding to their pressure. This volatility is to be expected.

So how are we to interpret this situation? If we take a snapshot of political opinion in the country we find views of the present government forming into two distinct camps – both of which I think are wrong. There are those loyalists who try to justify everything the government does. On the other side, you have the die-hard radicals who rush to conclude that nothing at all has changed and that the present state is merely a continuation of the old regime. Both interpretations are misleading.

It has to be understood that the Sri-Lankan government is a contradictory entity. Whilst still containing regressive elements of the past it also contains the progressive seeds of the future. If these progressive elements are to be cultivated properly then, as forward-thinking people, we must apply skill and patience in our dealings with the government. Whilst ruthless and constructive criticism is healthy and necessary, it's crucial to frame this criticism in a constructive way. Merely stirring up hostility among the population could have the negative effect of toppling a partially responsive government and returning us to the mercy of the forces that governed the terror period.

At the moment, the present government is relatively stable despite being on the receiving end of much criticism. Even Sri-Lanka's leader of the opposition Mr. Ranil Wicremasinge's attempts to revitalise his United National Party seem to have run out of steam. There is already talk about serious divisions within the UNP leadership. In my view, the difficuty they face is that of erasing the image of corruption, thuggery and terrorism that has tainted their history. This is proving troublesome.

I want now to consider the position of the present government in relation to the peace process. The People's Alliance stood for power on an anti-war platform and, given the huge support they received in both the parliamentary and presidential elections, we have every right to be hopeful of the peace process remaining on track.

It's also encouraging to see the LTTE now has a political department playing an active role, following the footsteps of the PLO, ANC and Sinn Fein. And the fact that their 'cessation of hostilities' has held over two months is a clear indication of the LTTE's control over their movement as a whole. This is a very positive sign. For, it is easier to negotiate with a politically mature, unified organisation which commands firm internal discipline.

But what grounds have we to assume that the intentions of the LTTE towards a political compromise are genuine? This seems to be the biggest reservation amongst those in favour of a settlement as well as the war enthusiasts. My guess is that although the LTTE would prefer a total separation, it is increasingly aware of the substantial benefits of a political compromise. A lasting peace would enable Tamil areas to develop economically on an unprecedented scale. Billions of dollars are likely to pour in as soon as the war is ended. And, once a vibrant economy is built Tamil, Muslim and even Sinhala communities living in surrounding areas (who have themselves felt neglected by successive governments in Colombo) would be attracted to the North rather than the South.

Moreover, I suspect the LTTE by now is convinced that the future prosperity of Tamil areas mainy depends (geographically, economically, culturally and politically) on the Sinhala 'South' and not on Tamil Nadu in South India.

As long as Colombo is willing to show respect for the Tamil nation's right to self-determination, as long as it refrains from 'imposing' a solution on Tamils by force, I'm strongly inclined to think that the LTTE would be willing to agree on a compromise settlement, paving the way for a lucrative Northern economy.

The LTTE seem to have realised that a dragging war is ultimately futile and that they could more effectively consolidate themselves as a political force among the Tamil people if they could lead them towards economic prosperity. For, since independence, none of the successive governments have done much for the Tamil areas in the North.

If we can accept that the LTTE has a genuine interest in establishing a lasting peace, what about the Sri-Lankan government? How genuine are they? As I've mentioned, the strongest pressure for a settlement stems from the changed perception among the Sinhala population who continue to exert considerable pressure. Beyond this, relaunching the war now would be a 'financial nightmare' for the government. The annual expenditure on the war amounts to more than is spent on Health and Education together. And recent state propaganda has ensured that every one in the country knows about it.

Moreover, people are well aware of the lucrative economic circumstances that peace would bring. Pledges from the donor countries together with the prospect of turning Sri-Lanka into an 'investor's paradise' must be extremely tempting to the economic planners in the government.

The pouring of dollars into a peaceful North for post-war reconstruction by hundreds of thousands of Tamil expatriates living in the West, Australia and the Middle East would contribute to the creation of a dynamic economy in Sri-Lanka as a whole.

Not to mention the benefits from the favourable publicity Sri-Lanka is bound to attract internationally should peace negotiations prove successful, not just the considerable fruits of tourism and investment.

I'm convinced that the national and international conditions for ending the war are very ripe indeed.

So then, if both sides have such good reasons to end the war, what's the problem?

I think it's quite simply a case of mutual distrust. And it must be admitted that both sides have very good reasons for mistrusting each other.

Take, for instance, the latest obstruction to the peace process. The LTTE has put forward a set of demands which are aimed at testing the sincerity of the government: to remove the Pooneryn camp completely; to lift the economic embargo in full; and to lift the ban on fishing communities in the North and East. All these demands are very popular among the Tamil masses. The LTTE suspects that the government's strategy is to isolate them from the Tamil masses and effectively corner them. That is why, the LTTE argue, the government (acting on advice from the armed forces) is reluctant to break the existing 'siege' situation by removing the Pooneryn camp.

The government, for their part, argue that the LTTE demands, if met, would compromise national security, again revealing mistrust of the LTTE's intentions.

This sort of distrust between the two sides who have been at war for over a decade isn't at all surprising. It'll be

Continued on page 14

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'LTTE is Looking For a Federal Solution to Conflict'

– Lawrence Thilakhar

[Interview given at Copenhagen by the LTTE's international spokesman, Mr. Lawrence Thilakhar to Sisira Wijesinghe, correspondent of *Sunday Island* (26.3.95)].

Q: *What is the present state of negotiations between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government as of today?*

A: Actually we are looking for the government to fix the date for the fourth round of talks to start discussing various outstanding day-to-day issues like lifting of the total embargo, and the opening of passages for people to come from the north to the south, and also about the fishing sanctions that should be lifted. The government has agreed on all the issues, but there is a question of implementation about what has already been agreed upon. So the LTTE is waiting for the return of the Colombo delegation in regard to these matters in the fourth round of talks.

Q: *When are you expecting the government to initiate in the fourth round of talks?*

A: We do not know, because the government has to fix the dates, and they have to come, because we are waiting.

Q: *It looks like the talks are now bogged down. What are the reasons for this?*

A: My impression is that there is a lot of pressure on Chandrika Kumaratunga. Earlier she was very enthusiastic about resolving the problem, but later on what we find is that there is lot of pressure on the President from the Colombo media, and military. So our feeling is that Chandrika too is succumbing to the pressures.

Q: *How do you propose to make a breakthrough unless you all are ready to respond to the government's gestures?*

A: That is why we are telling her to take some bold initiatives to carry forward the talks.

Q: *But the government's position seems very clear. The government claims that it has already granted whatever has been requested by your side to go on with talks except for the removal of the Pooneryn camp?*

A: You see, there are things very crucial, matters like fuel, fertilizers that affect the lives of the people.

Q: *But many of these items have been permitted according to the government?*

A: Without fuel there is no electricity, and no development project can be done. For example, the government sent two generators, but without fuel these generators can't function. So even for irrigation, there has to be fuel to start water-pumps.

Q: *But the allegation is that the LTTE hierarchy does not want the Sri Lankan government to handle those things purely by itself. Is there any truth in that?*

A: It is natural. Because the previous government got money from outside and spent for their own purposes like settling Sinhalese in the north-east, starting various development projects in the south. That is why when there is a development project in the north, it should be monitored and supervised by both the LTTE and the government. And that is why we are asking that the reconstruction or development committee be formed before the development projects are started. So the money will be used properly.

Q: *But the government has proposed to set up such development committees including the LTTE and all other democratic representatives of the Tamil community.*

A: But that is only a unilateral formation on the part of the government of Sri Lanka. It should be discussed with the LTTE, and there has to be equal representation of the LTTE and the government in such a committee. So that should be discussed.

Q: *In other words, you mean to say that before such committees are formed there has to be agreement only between both sides.*

A: What we are saying is that those things can be discussed after the government fixes a date for the fourth round of talks. Then those things that affect the people can be discussed quickly.

Q: *But the Sri Lankan government has clearly stated that in the event of any such committees being formed, you too can nominate members and participate actively in such development projects. What is your stand then?*

A: What the LTTE says is that there has to be a discussion before such committees are formed with having equal representation. The government has not so far discussed or done so.

Q: *But the government claims that you all have not responded positively to such gestures proposed by the government.*

A: This is purely the LTTE's demand that this type of committee be formed, and that we have to form these committees as early as possible to start the reconstruction very quickly.

Q: *Does it mean that such committees should be represented only by the LTTE? On the part of Tamil people do you want other Tamil segments to be also included?*

A: No, we are asking specifically for the LTTE. Because to resolve the problem, both the government and LTTE have to speak to each other. So we specifically ask such reconstruction committees should include LTTE.

Q: *It suggests that you directly refuse any other Tamil groups taking part in such committees.*

A: Yes, in that particular development and reconstruction committee we do not want any other groups to be represented.

Q: *Why is it so?*

A: Because the discussions are now between the LTTE and the government. So this committee is an outcome of the discussions we had with the government. The committee for the reconstruction and development in the north and east should therefore consist only of the LTTE and the government. This is one of our demands as well.

Q: *But in such a situation, the government will be blamed for not including other Tamil representatives in such a process, especially the groups which have already entered into the mainstream of democracy. Do you think that such a demand is democratic?*

A: This is something else. The problem is to address the day-to-day urgent problems of the people, and find a solution to the ethnic problem. The government has started talks with us on the assumption that day-to-day problems of Tamils will be solved, and it was agreed by the Colombo government.

Q: *Mr. Thilakhar, I am asking you again, is it all right on your part to exclude all other Tamil parties and groups and claim that you (LTTE) are the sole representative for Tamil people when parties such as the TULF have bagged many votes in the Eastern Province at elections?*

A: What I am saying is that it is the government which proposed the reconstruction to the LTTE, and they put

Continued on page 14

Continued from page 13

the plan to the LTTE. So the LTTE agreed to restart the reconstruction, and there was a suggestion by the LTTE that it should comprise only both parties. When they returned to Colombo, they changed the position.

Q: *Have you intimated this demand to the government in writing?*

A: Yes, the LTTE leader Prabhakaran in a letter suggested about forming of these committees before the fourth round of talks.

Q: *In such a situation how do you justify the exclusion of all other democratic Tamil groups from such a process?*

A: The talks and the agreement are now between the LTTE and the government. You see the main armed conflict is between the government and the LTTE. So the resolution of the armed conflict and also the resolution of the ethnic problem have to be carried forward only by both parties.

Q: *Then comes an allegation from the south that the government is purposely marginalising other democratic groups who have already selected peaceful means to resolve their problems. How do you counter such allegations?*

A: You see. They are already excluded because they are not included in the armed struggle. This democratic process can be discussed later on. The first and foremost is to alleviate the day to day problems of the people and the resolution of the war. So we have to tackle this first. First we should initiate the rehabilitation process only between two parties, because that was caused by the oppressive war unleashed by the government, and there was resistance to that. That was a crucial issue affecting the Tamil people.

Q: *If other parties too demand the participation in such a process as they too represent sections of Tamil people, what would be your alternative in such a situation, and what would you think as the alternative for the government?*

A: The government has to salvage the talks, and find a genuine and amicable solution while continuing to talk to the LTTE. While talking to the LTTE as agreed, the government has to start rehabilitation and other development projects. Then only the government will attend to the day to day problems of the people, and then only it will be able to take other substantial issues. These are effects of the war unleashed by the government. In resolving such issues the government will have to show good will.

Q: *In the event extensive devolution is granted to you, will the LTTE enter the mainstream of democratic politics?*

A: The foremost thing is the resolution of the ethnic conflict. Then only the LTTE can go to the democratic process.

Q: *In that case what is the solution you propose to the Sri Lanka government?*

A: Actually, the LTTE has already told that it will consider positively to a federal solution if the government's proposal is on those lines. If there is a federal solution, we will consider it.

Q: *In the event of any failure of such a solution what do you see as the alternative breakthrough to this crisis?*

A: Actually we will continuously ask the government to submit a solution that will fulfil the aspirations of the Tamil people. The government has to first put forward it, and we will then decide upon it whether it is acceptable or not.

Q: *If democratic elections are held in the north, what amount of support will you get among the general masses?*

A: This is a hypothetical question, because still there is only a cessation of hostilities. So first the cessation of hostilities has to be strengthened and be carried to make it a ceasefire. Then political discussions should start to resolve the problem. Then only we can talk about democratic resolutions. We are fully agreeable to a democratic system of government.

We are sure that our people will overwhelmingly as some figures say over 85 per cent people – support the LTTE. Our continuation of the struggle itself is an indication of the support we gain from our Tamil people.

Q: *Do not you think that LTTE would run the risk of being defeated if people feel that the resolution that you would arrive at is not as good as it ought to be?*

A: Before that there are so many things to be done foi the resolution of the problem. The Tamil people will definitely support the LTTE because they are the only people who fought for the emancipation of Tamil people. So Tamil are not fools to be fooled by various other Tamil groups which are collaborating with the government.

Q: *In addition to being the so-called driving force, or the liberating force behind the peace agreement, for Tamil people, what does your political programme consist of?*

A: Definitely it will be a democratic set up where so many parties and people can come and participate in elections. People will have power to decide who will be their representatives or their saviours.

Q: *So what is the political package you expect to give to the people?*

A: It will be a democratic structure, but we can't say because we have been fighting for an independent state. And now we have got into discussions with the government, and at this time we have to see what the government puts forward as the alternative proposal. Whatever the outcome of the talks, we will at the end get into the democratic process.

Q: *So at this moment the LTTE does not have any political manifesto?*

A: No! We have had our own independent state in the past. We have our own manifesto, and we have our own programme how it has to be ruled. We have a clear ideal that it will be a democratic country with multi-party system and with the freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and other civil liberties, and everything will be there. And it will be an economy on free market lines. So these are the political and social manifestos of an independent state. But now we are in a discussion. We have to focus on the current talks with the government.

Q: *Do you think other middle-class and upper-class Tamils living in other parts of the country would support the LTTE in the forthcoming years?*

A: We fully hope that the north-east population, and also Colombo people coming back to our areas, will fully support the LTTE.

Q: *Do you have a positive outlook about the peace negotiations now underway?*

A: Yes, we are very much hopeful of peace if the government can take this peace process boldly without succumbing to the pressures of various forces. Otherwise we are very hopeful.

Q: *How soon do you think you would be able to arrive at a solution?*

A: This is again dependent on the government when to start the fourth round of talks and again they have to settle day to day problems of Tamils. And it depends on this.

Continued from page 11

some time before the two sides learn to trust each other and help each other tackle the difficulties both are facing with regard to their own extremists.

But whatever the problems, whatever the obstacles that are bound to interrupt this process at every stage of its development, we are in the lucky position of being able to learn from the courageous efforts of fellow peacemongers in other parts of the world and take encouragement from their achievements, and utilise them in our own search for a lasting peace.

Chandrika Kumaratunga, the LTTE and the Tamil Conflict

by Adele Ann Balasingham

Ms. Chandrika Kumaratunga's credentials for Presidential office were given unprecedented endorsement and a vote of confidence by wider sections of the Sinhala masses. She was swept to power by a tidal wave of popular support. Her age represented a new generation of politicians at the helm of State affairs; her political history represented a departure from the wide-scale violence and oppression of past governments; her western education represented a coming together of progressive, informed ideals and Buddhist traditions.

Chandrika talked of peace not war, unity not division. She displayed potential as a democrat capable of understanding, accommodating and working with various shades of opinion and approaches. These characteristics augured well for the Sinhala population and at the same time generated a great deal of optimism amongst the Tamil community in the north and east. Euphoria amongst the Tamils stemmed, however, from a conception that Chandrika's qualities would be conducive to finding a permanent political settlement to the most critical, intractable and complex issue that affects their lives. The new, untainted Chandrika, they hoped, represented rationality; someone who would bravely and boldly take up the national conflict, confront racism in her electorate and offer a political solution that would satisfy the aspiration of the Tamil people.

However, the euphoria and expectations of the Tamil people when Chandrika assumed the Presidency have slowly disintegrated into disillusionment and a sense of hopelessness. Her approach to the national conflict, her handling of the LTTE in the negotiating process and her attitude towards the sufferings and hardships of the Tamil people indicate that she is unrealistic and unskilled in the art of dealing with complex and serious issues.

The political orbit in the south around which Chandrika conducts her affairs has no symmetry in the politics of the north and east. It is neither of the same trajectory or calibre. The democratic Parliamentary politics of the south has space for political wheeling and dealing, coaxing and cudgelling; it can be about gaining and losing power etc. The politics of the northeast are of a different dimension, far more grave than Chandrika has ever confronted in her political life. She is dealing with a nation of people who have been subjected to mind-chilling, blood-curdling racist violence, of systematic denial of basic rights, an economic embargo, military atrocities and usurpation of their traditional land, displacement and dispossession. The Tamil people's politics is a politics of armed struggle for self-determination. The commitment, determination and preparedness for extraordinary feats of self-sacrifice by the organisation conducting that struggle – the LTTE – is unmatched in the world today. In dealing with the Tamil national conflict Chandrika enters into a different dimension of the political world. She must constantly bear in mind that the Tamil people and the LTTE are exhausted with Sinhala politicians using the Tamil national question as a baiting tool for opposition politics; they are fed up with the failure of successive governments to reflect on the seriousness of the Tamil people's aspirations. In so far as the Tamil people are concerned the national conflict is a life and death struggle of a nation to survive and such a sacred issue is beyond the realm of cheap political gerrymandering and does not figure in their gameplay.

Chandrika, being the head of the State, is constitutionally bound to obligations and responsibilities towards all citizens irrespective of their nationality, race and religion. It is her over-riding duty to safeguard the interests, needs and concerns of all citizens. If Chandrika views the Tamil people as a crucial element of Sri Lankan citizenry, she has unavoidable obligations and responsibilities towards the Tamil people since they are the aggrieved community with serious socio-economic problems brought about by years of war, persecution and violence. The right of political choice, their struggle for the right to self-determination and their support for the LTTE, should not in anyway prejudice the role and function of the Head of State in the dispensing of equal justice and fairplay to all citizens. The reluctance on the part of Chandrika to make bold and just decisions on several issues that seriously impinge on the lives of the northern Tamils who have been deprived of essential items necessary for their social and economic existence, casts serious doubt as to whether she is acting as the Head of State conscious of her duties and responsibilities. The LTTE has accused her of partisanship for having given primacy to the interests of the Sinhalese army over and above the concerns of the Tamil people. It is crucial that Chandrika realises that the issues raised at the negotiating table cannot be reduced to private demands of the LTTE to promote their military interests but rather are genuine, urgent problems experienced by the people in the North.

The general criticism levelled against Chandrika among the Tamil circles is that she has failed to display a sense of seriousness in her approach to the LTTE, whereas the LTTE was deadly serious. Thus for example, Chandrika dispatched her negotiating team of bureaucrats with a mandate to work out a programme to alleviate the suffering of the Tamil people by resolving their day to day problems and to embark on a reconstruction programme immediately. It was widely expected that she would do just that during the early stages of the dialogue. The absence of politicians with the background knowledge of the ethnic conflict has made the LTTE believe that Chandrika's government was genuinely committed to address the socio-economic issues that confronted the northern Tamils. But the long delay in starting the reconstruction programme, the apprehensive reluctance to lift the ban on fuel and other essential items, the hostility and intransigence shown in withdrawing the Pooneryn army camp to facilitate the free and safe passage of the Jaffna people, indicate that her initial initiatives were superficial and had more to do with military concerns and southern politics.

It is generally assumed that Chandrika was not confident of an outright victory at the Presidential polls and anticipated that elections would be held in the North and therefore attempted to win the Tamil vote by offering pledges to resolve all the urgent problems coupled with extensive, economic relief. Furthermore, a yes vote for Chandrika from the Tamils in the north would certainly have enabled her to argue that she and she alone was the authentic representative of the Tamil people. Her political leverage over the Tamil population in the north would have been complete. But events took a different turn. Chandrika's political strategy did not materialise and her approach towards the Tamils and the LTTE changed

Continued on page 16

Continued from page 15

radically. The letters of communication exchanged between the Government and the LTTE demonstrate that the Government attempted to bypass the day to day issues. The LTTE however stood firm on the position and insisted that the early stages of the negotiation, should deal with the urgent immediate issues of the Tamils.

The contradictory positions of the Government and the LTTE, with regard to modalities of talks and the issues to be addressed have created an impasse in the peace process. The three rounds of talks that took place for only a few hours a day have failed to achieve anything substantial other than a fragile cessation of hostilities for which even the monitoring committees are not appointed. Failing to fulfil pledges made around election time is a common game played by politicians. It does not in itself make Chandrika a dishonest politician. However, the developments in the negotiating process where pledges are broken with such ease lead one to conclude that Chandrika's perceptions of the Tamil conflict and the LTTE are contiguous with the old order.

Strategy

Ultimately, in contravention of established negotiating procedure and protocol, the Government has unilaterally announced the implementation of its unacceptable strategy regarding the economic embargo and the opening of a path. In other words, the Government is totally dismissive of both the LTTE's and the Tamil people's wishes and has reverted to the old role of a central authoritarian Government imposing its objectives on a population that thirsts to decide its own political destiny.

While the discourse of political negotiations has reached a standstill, the Government is actively involved in building and consolidating the military machine. This has alarmed the LTTE. The boost in defence spending, the continuing recruitment campaign, special combat training programmes, military hardware purchases – such projects of militarisation amount to a preparation for war and have contributed to a deepening scepticism among the Tamils and the LTTE regarding the Government's intentions.

Where, therefore, does Chandrika stand on the Tamil issue and the LTTE? Well, by entering into negotiations with the LTTE she has acknowledged the LTTE as a major player in the national conflict. However, having realised that the LTTE can neither be manipulated or seduced into Government acquiescence the Government has fallen back into a high-handed dismissive attitude characteristic of all Sinhala politicians. Such a revelation by the Government was inevitable since a national struggle spearheaded by a national movement is the antithesis of Chandrika's mindset. Firstly, we should never forget that Chandrika, despite her worldly experience, mingles essentially with the bourgeoisie and the Kandyan aristocracy and inevitably will be exposed to the influences emanating from that social circle.

Philosophy

However, Chandrika's ancestry and her basic loyalties are neatly masked by her political philosophy. On this issue she scores well. Whereas J.R. Jayewardene, Premadasa and Wijetunga and the other Sinhala political elite articulated and behaved like chauvinists Chandrika is more subtle. Multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-religious concepts fit appropriately within her liberal, pluralist view of society. For Chandrika there are 'minorities' in the island, but in the liberal tradition they must be treated well and equally. For her, the LTTE is a group of angry young men and women rightly outraged by the injustices perpetrated against them by previous regimes. However, when good government comes to power and guarantees their rights then they should accept this hand of friendship and get on with the life of a model citizen. All this is very acceptable to the liberal mind but for the Tamils it amounts to nothing more than old wine in new, more sophisticated and crafted bottles.

Chandrika's pluralist philosophy cannot fit into the political vision of the LTTE. For them the Tamil people constitute themselves as a nation with an inalienable right to a homeland and the Tamil issue should be dealt with as a nationality problem. The principle of national self-determination, which provides for nations the freedom to choose and shape their political destiny is the cardinal principle on which the LTTE's struggle is based. The Tamil Tigers are firmly committed to their principles and are prepared to die for their cause. The big question remaining therefore, is, can these two sets of contradictory perceptions be reconciled in the negotiating process.

(Courtesy of *Inside Report* published by the LTTE from Jaffna).

The Peace Question : Understanding Reality on Both Sides

by Rajan Hoole and K. Sritharan

Peace is something that most of us earnestly desire, and none more so than the ordinary people of this country, who one way or the other, have suffered the most.

Yet the path is so perilous and the cost of wrong conceptualisation, shoddy groundwork and wrong decisions most tragic for those who have the least ability to influence decisions made. It is this aspect of the matter which causes the greatest concern.

Do the government, its negotiators and peace activists possess an adequate understanding of the problem and its ramifications?

Presentations on the subject in the South have been mainly to do with legal, economic and constitutional aspects, and not least the impact on foreign relations, in particular the role of India.

Several of these have been very enlightened and have gone on to question the constricting role of Sinhala nationalist ideology and of the disastrous politics based on it.

Yet these have generally not gone to the heart of the matter, which if they do, raises several awkward moral questions.

If these moral questions are not discussed we will fail to understand the very deep seated alienation of the Tamil community and the frightening repressive machinery that has been erected within this community, supposedly as the only means of resisting state oppression. The failure to understand one would also mean an inability to understand the other, except to be awed by its destructive potential from time to time.

Take the matter of well attested removal by the forces of hundreds of Tamil civilians from refugee camps in the East who then disappeared; the bombing and shelling of civilian areas in the North with no evident rational purpose, leaving the civilians to believe that they were the intended victims; and the Welikade prison massacre of July 1983. These cannot be put down to spur of the moment reflex action, but stemmed to a large extent from consciously articulated state policy.

Without going into a catalogue of

alleged discrimination, we pose one question: As regards state policy, what does the Mahaveli Authority's 'Weli Oya' settlement signify, not just taking into account the Tamil inhabitants driven away, but also the not less hapless Sinhalese civilians settled there to lead a grim existence?

Until recently there has been very little, if any, public discussion about these in South. If raised at all, it was mostly to be then buried away as collateral effects of conflict. The human aspect of this violence is seldom faced up to, how it has scarred a people to the point of legitimizing a growth such as the LTTE.

At present, assessments of the problem commonly held by people in decision making circles, negotiators and the peace lobby could be dangerously complacent. The jarring facts are skirted. The LTTE is treated as a classic rebel group wanting maximum advantage at negotiations, but eventually willing to compromise like most rebel groups. After all guerrilla leaders are supposed to mellow and want to settle down once they are about 40!

Did not Prabakharan reach 40 last year? Are not, after all LTTE leaders sending their offspring to leading Mission schools? Surely, they are administering Jaffna very well and would like the opportunity to administer it better once sufficient progress has been made in the peace process to start sending in the resources for reconstruction. Can the LTTE after all go on resisting international opinion?

Indeed, there were very similar expectations in 1987 and 1990 and something went tragically wrong. Securing the peace therefore demands greater attention to the internal complexities of the problem.

Some grim realities

The November 15, 1994 issue of 'Ulakath Thamilar' published by the World Tamil Movement in Toronto reproduced the speech made by LTTE leader Prabakaran on 'Great Heroes Day' November 27 1989, undoubtedly on centrally directed instructions. It said:

'Moreover, where Prabakaran is concerned, Prabakaran is not an individual. He is the representative of a nation. Should Prabakaran become a traitor to Tamil Eelam, as did Amirthalingam earlier, he too would deserve to be shot dead. Therefore as we celebrate great Heroes Day, traitors should also be extirpated from the midst of the people'.

The special issue of the journal was ostensibly meant to glorify young men and women, often children, whose lives were sacrificed for the LTTE's cause. The editorial stated:

'Upon the 27th day of November a youngster (Lt. Shankar, the first martyr) closed his eyelids after uttering the words: "We will not see the dawn (that will see an end to the sufferings of the Tamils) unless we spill our blood and pay the price with our life" '.

Such stirring stuff makes strange companions for other items in the journal the sum of which brings out a horrifying and vulgar reality showing the hypocricy and cynicism in the whole business.

The current recruitment drive in the East is not through political meetings and publications as in the early phase of the struggle where several groups put forward their alternatives and questions could be raised. It is but through showing videos and pictures of heroic action by the LTTE and the aftermath of atrocities by the forces to young children and thus rousing their emotions. Those giving their momentary consent are quickly carried away. These are done under conditions where even during negotiations for peace, elders in Eastern villages cannot ask questions about the purpose of this exercise.

There are of course no videos about children recruited in the past who had become complete wrecks after being sent into villages to massacre Muslims and Sinhalese, including women and children: or of children with limbs blown and traumatised after being used in wasteful sledgehammer tactics in attempts to breach the defences of Sri Lankan army camps. Why political options were repeatedly spurned in preference to this massive physical and mental death are questions almost never asked.

What we are witnessing is in effect the very elaborate ritual of a religion requiring child-sacrifice. The sacrificial victims are the children of the Tamil poor in the North-East, carried away after being administered narcotics in the form of action videos, while their elders have no choice but to watch in silence.

Behind the LTTE's actions

Different segments of Tamil society through their nationalist perceptions see and identify certain aspects of the LTTE as representing their interests. But they are not prepared to see the LTTE's politics with its dynamism in toto and thus identify its destructive core. For certain sections there is no need for that exercise as they could opt out when convenient. On the other hand for the rural poor and the children who are living in the North-East, the whole affair is a deadly snare.

The LTTE through internal terror as well as its narrow nationalist rhetoric coupled to a militaristic approach, institutionalised a culture of hatred and death to the extent that it is unable to come out of its suicidal course. A unique brand of personal loyalty to the leader and to the movement, imposed through an oath together with continuous brain washing is the hallmark of the LTTE.

The LTTE's cause may be unattainable and utterly destructive, and perhaps it sees no room for manoeuvre for all that it has done. But it has never been in confusion about what it ought to do in a given situation. Its mind has been very clear about how it should maximize advantage from the confusion and opportunism of others whether state powers, intellectuals, peace makers, religious leaders or others.

The dilemmas of peace

The peace process currently underway comes from the heart of the people of the South, and is an opportunity not to be mislaid. It must be pursued even if the chances of immediate success are low. It would seem that so much hope has been placed on the success of present negotiations and the continuance of the ceasefire, that little thought is given to alternative and more likely scenarios.

When things do go wrong, the elite who influenced decisions and are responsible for misjudgements could shrug their shoulders and walk away to other gainful pursuits. But who is going to be responsible for the ordinary people who will bear the brunt of misjudgements? This unchanging propensity to go on repeating the same blunders every few years is among the biggest intellectual and moral failures in the South.

Any dilution of democracy in the South, any perceived attacks on free expression, will work to the detriment of the peace process. It must be remembered that the main constraint on the LTTE is the overwhelming desire for peace on the part of the Tamil people.

The PA leadership had taken a very positive approach on the ethnic issue during the election campaigns, which was unparalleled in post independence politics. But to translate the positive sentiments into corresponding actions and produce adequate results needs to overcome several obstacles ahead. As we mentioned earlier, the LTTE's politics or for that matter the dominant Tamil politics is not going to help in removing such obstacles.

Continued on page 18

Continued from page 17

There are Tamil opinion makers constantly trying to push the message that ultimately the Sinhalese cannot be trusted and any Sinhala government will betray the Tamils.

They do not acknowledge the healthy change in the south, which is still a nascent plant. Instead of taking responsibility to help to grow to maturity, they would do everything to frustrate and destroy it. Should the peace process fail, they would be the happiest to boast about their prophetic prescience in having always been right about the Sinhalese. Their Sinhalese counterparts are also waiting in the sidelines to complement them.

With the prospect of renewed war not to be taken lightly, serious thought must be given to how the army is going to respond to contingencies. As things stand there is the very serious danger that if conflict were to resume an angry army would again take it out on Tamil citizens in the East, while bombs and shells rain on Jaffna. Then much of what was gained by the initiatives taken would be lost. After all these years of tragedy there has been no frank appraisal accompanied by institutional changes to ensure that the forces do not respond according to the agenda determined by the LTTE.

A large share of the responsibility in securing the peace lies also with the Tamil elite. It is their responsibility to understand and renounce the hypocrisy and double standards that legitimise the LTTE brand of nationalism.

We should stop talking and behaving as though all what this politics has made the ordinary people of the North-East pay in blood, ruin, mental trauma, torture and pervasive insecurity is in order to enable a class of Tamils living elsewhere to move with dignity and security.

Why have all these people died, why are so many innocent young beings involuntarily taken away from their parents to bear arms to sustain this cause needs to be answered. We also need to be sensitive to the perceptions of ordinary Sinhalese people who also have their experience of the LTTE.

We also need to get away from the notion that we could go on blaming the State and the Sinhalese while pretending that Tamils being the victims, persistent atrocious behaviour by their so called leaders is of no relevance. That could only give us some perverse pleasure in bringing out the worst in others while inexorably destroying ourselves.

(Courtesy: *The Sunday Times*, 26.3.95).

Misconceptions and Anxieties In a Time of Change — I

by Dr. S. Narapalasingam

The aim of this paper is to discuss some misconceptions and well-founded anxieties considered to prevail among many Sri Lankans at this crucial time of change towards the promised peace and prosperity for all citizens of Sri Lanka. The comparative comments provided are largely based on the writer's understanding of known structures of polities and governments in the developed and less developed countries and the ways they function. Obviously, some may have different experiences and views. Nevertheless, it is hoped that this presentation will interest others to reflect their own views and concerns at this critical time. Any discussion on the system of governance suitable for the Tamil region must take into account its distinct social, cultural and economic factors and the 'democratic' system that has prevailed in the whole country since independence.

Democracy

Democracy is widely known to mean a government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them through a system of representation usually involving periodically held free elections. To many societies of the less developed countries (LDCs), this is relatively a new twentieth century concept copied from a monolithic culture. A democratic government elected freely, has an opposition in the parliament. Ideally, the division is based on the differences in the political ideologies of various parties and/or in their means of achieving the undisputed socio-economic goals of the society. The system of rule of the majority inherent in democracy works satisfactorily in nation-states, where the various parties are constituted solely on different political ideologies and not on ethnic, territorial, religious and sectarian grounds. This is to be expected as a nation-state is characterised by the inhabitation of relatively homogeneous people. Political parties tend to be formed along parochial division in many sovereign states, primarily because of marked historical differences and disputes, which had been suppressed earlier by either foreign or authoritarian rule.

The comment is that the centralised rule of the majority in democracy is in harmony with its spirit only when all ethnic or religious or regional groups accept its authority as the rational arrangement of exercising their right to govern themselves. Yet the concept of democracy is desired by all diverse groups found within existing states, which once were separate territories. The two desires viz. the preservation of the coherence of the state in existing form and the acceptance of the rule of the majority inherent in democracy are inconsistent in such heterogenous societies.

They can be reconciled without oppressive rule only by the decentralisation of some agreed powers of governance to the relevant regions. In essence, this is the democratic federal system of government. There are numerous possibilities of constituting a federal system and this subject is not within the scope of this paper.

Social Justice

Any system of rule based strictly on social justice must observe social equality rejecting hereditary, caste and arbitrary class distinctions or privileges. Social justice and true democracy are complementary attributes of ethical rule. The persistent work of Mahatma Gandhi to eradicate casteism and unite all sections of Indians must be seen in this light, besides the moral issue involved. Hence, even under decentralised democratic rule there should not be any discriminations based on caste or creed. The awareness of oneness that gives credence to a nation-state must prevail similarly in the autonomous region to the smooth working of democracy there. Democracy without social justice and the rule of law is concealed form of fascism. Indeed, it can be manipulated to reinforce social inequalities instead of promoting social justice. Hence, democracy does not necessarily guarantee social justice or ethical rule.

One party rule

The choice to elect freely the desired political parties to represent the people in parliament is an important ingredient of true democracy. One party governments are known to claim to be democratic. In practice, this has been found to be easily susceptible to abuse of ruling powers. There are, however, situations when governments of national unity are formed in democratic societies, especially during times of

war when their sovereignty is threatened by external aggressions. Societies committed to democracy will not accept this as a permanent arrangement to be continued indefinitely even after the hostilities have ended.

There seems to be some anxiety regarding the perceived commitment of the LTTE to a political system based on one party rule, inferred from the use of coercive methods to assert its dominance in the North-East region. In a recent interview with the press (excerpts were published in the February, 1995 issue of *Tamil Times*), its chief spokesman allayed this fear when he replied: 'Once a political solution is reached, not only the LTTE but any political party could seek representation at a free and fair election'. The justification for the authoritarianism of this group had been ascribed to the war it was waging against the State to obtain an independent sovereign state of Tamil Eelam. Its firm commitment to socialist ideology had also been viewed by some, discerned from an interview given by the leader in 1986, as favouring a single party rule. (Ref: *The Sri Lankan Tamils*, edited by Chelvadurai Manogaran and Bryan Pfaffenberger, 1994).

The well-informed Taraki (this is a pseudonym), after his recent visit to Jaffna has stated in an article (*The Island* of March 5, 1995) that today's LTTE is very different. Its ranks are 'moulded in a manner to make them respect and work in a system which is fast developing a distinct and regularised division of labour between military and civilian matters.' It has put in place independent administrative and legal systems with defined structures, within a very short period. Many independent observers have praised the widespread discipline, the absence of anti-social activities, and the observance of law and order seen prominently within the area under the control of LTTE.

One cannot overlook the fact that the social reform that has taken place in the North as a result of abolishing the rigid caste hierarchy, raising women's status, prohibiting the demand of dowries, etc., would not have materialised voluntarily without this kind of approach. The canon of liberation movements worldwide is that the end justifies the means! Notwithstanding the existing belligerent condition, some appear to be apprehensive of the excessive restrictions on individual freedoms similar to those found in police states. Any comment on this anxiety at this stage before the peaceful settlement of the conflict may be conjectural. However, it is certain that the perpetuation of such practices will not be tolerated by the people. Moreover, the active participation of private investors in economic development, which has become the global norm will be deterred by such strict policing of normal activities during peacetime.

Socialism

Both ethnic groups in Sri Lanka are committed to socialism from the proclamations of various Sinhalese and Tamil leaders. This concept appears to imply different meanings in common parlance. Socialism, in theory means governmental ownership and administration of the means of production and distribution of goods or a system of society or group living in which there is no private property. One can see the difficulty in reconciling this concept with the free market concept advocated by the industrialised countries to the LDCs. Nevertheless, many governments of the LDCs, including Sri Lanka, which pursue vigorously the policy of privatising the state-owned assets find some virtue in retaining their commitment to socialism.

In the poorer countries, the popular perception seems to be that socialism is not strictly the opposite of capitalism but more opposed to private exploitation. According to an American dictionary capitalism means 'an economic system characterized by private or corporate ownership of capital goods, by investments that are determined by private decision rather than state control, and by prices, production, and the distribution of goods that are determined mainly by competition in a free market'. The concept of free market is an ideal and is not applied universally even by its ardent advocates in their own economies. There are many examples to substantiate this view but it is sufficient here to mention the quota restriction imposed on the import of textiles from Sri Lanka, by the US government.

Socialism viewed as a means to ensure fair distribution of power, wealth and opportunity, protect the employees from unscrupulous employes and consumers from exploiters selling inferior and harmful products and services, provide certain basic services essential for socio-economic (human) development (which the private sector cannot provide in the public interest), and care for the future of the children, the sick and the needy is certainly a noble concept. All these imply intervention by the state in the public interest and obviously no one can expect the inanimate market forces to act in a humane and just manner.

This intervention takes place in various forms, some of which may appear inimical to democratic principles. In practice, it is necessary to protect the weaker sections of the society from being exploited and subjugated by the more powerful groups. Certainly, it is abhorrent when misused to satisfy selfish demands or those of some pressure groups. Democratic freedom is not absolute as it is conditioned by the rights of other members of the society. It is precisely for this reason that various legislations and regulations as well as institutions to administer them impartially are necessary in a true democracy (where the freedoms are not abused). The interference by any arm of government in the judiciary or in the democratic process is unacceptable and definitely undermines democratic rule.

The point emphasized here is that the commitment of a group or a government to socialism is not to be feared as something dreadful; on the contrary this is most essential for the progress of all societies. Democracy and socialism are two sides of the same coin and together prevent exploitation of ordinary citizens as consumers and employees either by powerful individuals or groups or private institutions or importantly by the state itself, provided the social aspects of the two concepts as indicated above are observed. It is relevant to mention that the socialist parties in Western Europe are vehement defenders of democracy.

Ultimately, it is the will of the people that will determine the system of governance and dominate events. The newly emerged students group, the Taleban, in Afghanistan is currently controlling one-third of the country with the support of the people. It has set out to disarm the militant groups that fought against the army of the former Soviet Union. The former Mujahidins who liberated Afghanistan from Soviet occupation and influence and subsequently continued the internecine feud are in full control with the help of their military might in the capital Kabul. However, the Talebans are a force that cannot be ignored in forming the interim government. This development in Afghanistan cannot be brushed aside as an exception. Any group however powerful, once it has lost the confidence of the people can control them only at great economic and social cost which in the end will turn out to be self-defeating.

Sri Lankan Experience

All Sri Lankan governments had proclaimed persistently and loudly their commitments to democracy and socialism. The most vociferous of all was the UNP government elected to

Continued on page 26

Marxism and Ethnicity: Rethinking the Fundamentals

by Dr. Kumar David

(Continued from previous issue).

State-Nation-Class

This section of the paper is devoted to an examination of nature of the state in the newly independent countries and its interaction with class formation and the national question. The first point that needs to be made is that as colonialism withdraws it does not leave behind a society with a strong potential ruling class in place. The other side of the same coin is the economic backwardness and the weakness and distortion of the productive forces in these countries. From the beginning, therefore, the state is an unstable and tottering structure. The most primitive form is the military state, governance by the crude violence of a body of armed oppressors in a manner reminiscent of the ordering of the proto-state among old barbarian hordes. The junta, in the case of the smallest or most unstable military regimes, rests on the narrowest of possible social bases, the military itself, which is held together by pure violence until it is overthrown by another armed horde similarly intent on plunder. Even if less transparent in some case, this is the taxonomical genesis and quintessential character of all third world military dictatorships.

In larger countries with military regimes, the formal class structures are better formed. Although the ruling class is not always able to sustain power, at all times on its own within and through civil society, it does have its residues of strength. It also has its liberal and democratic segments who despise the uncouthness of the gangsters in khaki uniform. The relationship between the military regime and the class basis of government and state is now a more complex and changeable one. In this unstable environment, with both the ruling class and the sections of the military leaning for support on narrow and specific social segments, the activation of ethnicity as a political dimension is frequent. This is the only way these entities can survive once bereft of their moral basis. At best, the state and the proto-state may enjoy short lived periods of ideological hegemony during moments of military victory over the ethnic 'enemy', but true political hegemony and moral acceptability, among their own people, always evades them. Physical suffering, in those cases where conditions of war prevail, further accentuates this alienation of the state and the proto-state from their respective ethnic populations.

Ethnic instability, however, is not a peculiarity of the Third World. At the moment of writing Yugoslavia is attempting to tear itself apart and the future relationship of the ex-soviet countries is a matter of much contention, and there is Ulster, Quebec and the Basque Provinces, to mention but a few. Yugoslavia appears to be a good reference point to make some relevant points about the problems of consolidation of nation states.

The consolidation of several South Slav nationalities (:tribe and kingdom) into a single state took place in tortuous ways that can be traced from the fall of the Austro-Hungarian empire up to its realization in Tito's Socialist Yugoslavia. Throughout this period, and up to now, ethnocentrism, Serbian domination, Croatian extremism, Albanian 'irredentism', have remained now dormant, now threatening, on the political landscape of the modern nation state. The progress that has been made, though halting and interrupted, has to do with two imperatives; a recognition by South Slav nationalists of the mutual advantages of Slav unity and the natural tendencies that flowed from the ideology of Yugoslav Communism.[12]

As new nations in the third world, and elsewhere as the Yugoslav and Soviet examples show, struggle towards the consolidation of nation states, two crucial lessons can be learnt. First periods of consolidation will alternate with periods of crisis and rupture, and second, the later periods may include the re-drawing of the boundaries of these nation states. Furthermore, the time scale inherent in nation formation is an extremely long one and is deeply punctuated by economic success and failure. In the economically advanced countries, USA, Canada, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, France, mainland-UK, and so on, although ethnic conflict is far from absent, the issue of the redefinition of national boundaries is not of real significance.

The general hypothesis that this analysis leads to is that while class, state and ethnic variables (or political and military factors, to state it in another way) account for the sharp turns and sometimes irreversible ruptures and rearrangements, in the long run the consolidation of the nation state, arising partly therefrom, is determined mainly by the economic success of the prevailing mode of production. To put it crudely, there are two dis-synchronous time cycles at work, and they impinge on each other and are partly, but not wholly, determined by each other. Therefore, we have to think of overdetermination as a dynamic concept describing a changing reality, and to understand that the impinging of these two different structures on each other mediates the metabolism of change. The consolidation of new nation states is imbued with an uncertainty at the root of which lies this dis-synchrony of the determining events and variables.

Limits of Conventional Solutions

The turmoil arising from ethnic conflict has now been with us for several decades and much has been attempted, and written about, as a 'solution' to the problem. To the extent that all of these answers have been around and/or been attempted in practice for this long, they are neither new nor radical any more, and for this reason, it is convenient to refer to them as conventional solutions. To this category belong 'solutions' of the left and the right, of oppressors and the oppressed, and among them number the following:-

a) Forcible, mainly military, integration, incorporation or elimination of recalcitrant ethnicities.

b) Civil wars, national liberation struggles, separatism.

c) Federalism, regionalism, autonomy, democratization, economic decentralization, implemented to various degrees and in various forms.

d) Statesmanship, its opposite political chicanery, linkage between class politics and self determination concepts, ethno-coalition politics.

e) Foreign interference, intervention or intercession, by other countries and/or various agencies such as the UN, EEC, IMF, human rights and peace movements.

In practice, obviously, many or all of these factors are at work all the time and in each case some one or the other is the central strategy at any given time. In this section of the paper the limits of such solutions will be explored in general terms; although based on the experiences of the last four decades, explicit references to individual cases will be avoided for the sake of brevity.

The first assertion that I believe is possible, is that, unlike in previous centuries (the colonial and the settler period) a forcible or military solution is exceptional, if not impossible, in the present period. That is to say, a military solution to a mature ethnic movement, whether by its defeat or conversely by the victory of separatism, is very exceptional indeed. The reasons lie in both the changed nature and balance of world politics as well as in world technological changes and the near universal accessibility of this technology, albeit at a price.

The second important feature is to understand the complex, and in a sense peculiar, ways in which constitutional re-arrangements and enhanced democratisation can effect ethnic instabilities. Thus, for example, the transition from a repressive regime under which ethnic tension lay invisible, to a more democratic one which sets about attempting to restore greater autonomy, may lead not to a period of compromise and harmony, but rather to a period in which various extremist tendencies gain ground, narrow chauvinist ideas triumph and ethnic clashes in society multiply. The root cause here is to do with the fundamental limitedness of ethnic consciosness itself, which question will be discussed a little later in this section.

Much has been said about democracy and autonomy/devolution being the corner-stones of a solution to ethnic conflict. Great faith has been placed on this approach by democratic peoples movements in affected countries and by international human rights and peace agencies. Undoubtedly, these assertions as a set of core ideas are valuable. The point, however, is that their limitedness as a complete programme, has not been sufficiently drawn out and discussed.

There is a fundamental contradiction, therefore, between ethnicity as the embodiment of the identity of a separate consciousness (arising from and carrying the stamp of an isolated mode of production), and the reality of modern nation states and, indeed, the modern world, where the integration of the mode of production is far advanced, and material intercourse is universalised between different peoples and inextricably intertwined between nations.

Some discussion of ethnic consciousness is in order at this point. There are several conflicting value judgements that have to be ordered and reconciled. There is ethnicity as the specificity, the richness and the repository of the culture of a particular people; there is tolerance and respect for all ethnicities and the call for a 'celebration of plurality'; there is identity as a haven of security and hope for oppressed and exploited races and religions; there is ethnicity as a narrow identity in a material world which has far outgrown the origins of the consciousness of separate identities; there is ethnicity as a politically and morally divisive influence; there is ethnicity as racism, chauvinism and prejudice. Apart from the trite observation that ethnicity is good but too much of it, like red meat, is bad for the body (politic), liberal philosophy has not had much else to say. Something more, however, is crying to be said.

It has to be recognised that ethnic consciousness, in the final analysis, is a remembrance of things past, and as mankind grows it will, in the words of St. Paul, 'put aside childish things'. Surely, there will be a universalisation of our heritage instead of an eternal particularisation of it? The sense of identity and security that particularity provides, and which indeed is so important at times today, must nevertheless be seen as an ephemeral phase in the longer journey that mankind has undertaken. When men circumnavigate the sun and settle on Mars will they still carry their ethnic identities with them? Perhaps, and this gives rise to the need for some remarks regarding ethnic ideology of a more base kind.

I am using the terms ethnic ideology as differentiated from ethnic consciousness to denote the base elements, racism, intolerance, prejudice and chauvinism which are a part of the ethno-political scene. Such ideologies are still deep and divisive all over the world; they are not confined to small numbers of less enlightened individuals or to extremist organisations.[13]

The ever so comforting assertion that say, racism or communalism, do not run deep in the ordinary people who are but innocents misled by guileful politicians, is nothing but a naive oversimplification. Divisive ethnic consciousness, chauvinism, racism and religious intolerance, as the case may be, are ubiquitous ideologies that run deep among the people in various ethnic groups, at least for protracted periods. It is simply untue and naive, and flies in the face of empirical evidence to assert during an epoch of sustained ethnic conflict that the rural folk, the ordinary man and woman, the middle classes, the worker, and so on, are free from prejudice like the noble savage and are simply the victims of false leaders and opportunist politicians. Ethnic ideology has a deep grip on mass audiences for reasons that have already been discussed in the foregoing pages and false prophets and opportunist politicans may be more a result than a cause. We can borrow this quote about the authoritarian state[14] and read it quite meaningfully with ethnicity in mind,

> . . . .despite the notoriety of the Shah, Bokasa, Somoza and Gairy, and despite the unmistakable influence they have had on the state and on political forms in their societies, it is not the leaders who determined the character of these states – they are more effect than cause. Consequently, as we shall see, the authoritarian state cannot be reduced to the existence of a dictator or to authoritarian and dictatorial forms of rule, although these accompany it. We must look at the state as a historical materialist category and understand its social and material basis.

- If, for example, Sinhala chauvinism is a fact, it is then also a deep reality of the consciousness of the corresponding people. To move forward in the long fight against false ideology is a major task that cannot be avoided. This is a sustained struggle and will not be accomplished in a few brief years and for long periods the task will fall on a few who have the vision and the courage to bear it. A whole epoch of disappointment and defeat will precede tangible achievements in the larger social arena. The reason why progress will be slow and difficult is because ethnic ideology has old and deep roots which have been reinforced by modern social and political conflict and economic crisis. The defeat of ethnic ideology, a *sine qua non* for ending ethnic conflict, will necessarily be a protracted process.

About Dialetics

At a sufficiently philosophical level the ideology of ethnicity must be rejected as false consciousness. The economic unification of the world is irreversible and modern science implies the universalisation of knowledge. As barriers break down, culture intermingling is going on apace. Yet the rights of oppressed nations to self-determination must be upheld, democratic and cultural-linguistic-religious rights of ethnic minorities must be protected and a plural, and by implication secular, society must be advanced. Do these two assertions appear to contradict each other? I think not. It is not a contradiction to accept the unavoidable limitations of the world as one finds it while undertaking at one and the same time a commitment to

Continued on page 23

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Continued from page 21

ending such limitations. Surely, it is not contradictory to say:

> Religion is at once the expression of real oppression and the protest against that oppression. Religion is the sign of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, the soul of soulless conditions. . . .To abolish religion as the illusory happiness of the people is a demand for their real happiness. The call to abandon illusion about their conditions is the call to abandon a condition which requires illusion. Thus, the critique of religion is in embryo the critique of the vale of tears whose halo is religion. . . .Criticism has plucked the imaginary flowers from the chain, not so that man may bear the chain without fantasy or consolation, but so that he can cast off the chain and gather the living flower. . . .so that he shall think, act, and fashion his reality as a man who has lost his illusions and regained his reason, so that he will revolve about himself as his own true sun.

and while saying this, at the same time, to demand the freedom of religion for all men!

Another reason for reproducing this only too well known passage at some length is that there is a parallel between this criticism of the socio-psychological role of religion and the criticism of ethnic ideology as false consciousness in this paper.

The point then is that a true approach to ethno-politics must run simultaneously at two levels. One simply has to grasp the following dialectic: It is not only a commitment to oppose racial or religious oppression, to stand up against oppressive regimes and social orders, but also, in the final analysis, a commitment to a new and, paradoxically, opposite world order and vision of universal human consciousness. Therefore the issues of class and social justice are inseparable from those of national and ethnic justice. No organisation which fails to link these two aspects of social change within itself can achieve lasting solution to either.

Conclusion

The thesis developed in this paper has argued that ethnic-conflict as a modern political phenomenon is not confined to backward societies in which the state is still in the process of formation and consolidation, and that it will persist for a further period of human civilisation. The events of the last few years and more importantly their underlying causes – sustained ethnic oppression and conflict, based, in part, on the persistence of ethnic consciousness in civil society – which have festered for many decades prior to the explosive manifestation, and which manifestations are in any case only signposts of the ebb and flow of more fundamental trends, have amply justified this thesis.

The paper has also insisted that the activation, the catalysation, of some ethnicity somersaulting it from a latent state into the sphere of real and intense political activity, can only be understood on the basis of a concrete, historical materialist, examination. It cannot be understood from an idealist analysis, that is it cannot be understood in terms of a thesis primarily based on the 'philosophy', language, ethnic traits, ancient history, some supposed natural characteristic or consciousness, and so on, of a particular race, religion or people. This too has been borne out by recent events, which have furthermore dramatically justified the assertion that whether a problem is religious in one location, linguistic in a second, and racial in a third, is far less important than the specific socio-economic dynamics that actually drive the events forward. Theoretically, this has justified the introduction and use of the generic category 'ethnic' as a valid concept in the construction of modern political theory.

The paper has also discussed the dichotomous nature of modern ethno-politics – being at one and the same time, an expression of a peoples' desire for liberation and a recrudescence of enmity and xenophobia. The concepts of overdetermination time dis-synchrony were found to be useful in thinking through the uneven and dynamic nature of the complex interactions between the different elements (economy, class, state, ethnicity) of a social formation. The paper has argued against certain reductionist approaches and has sought to debunk naivete of underestimating the depth of ethnic prejudice in the populace at large. A dialectical approach which attempts to reconcile what is feasible at a given time with commitment to a long term vision has been advocated.

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[8] Santasilan Kadirgamer, *'Lanka: Nationalism, self-determination and conflict'* pp. 181-212 and Kumar David, *'Roots and results of Racism in Sri Lanka'* pp. 213-247, both in *Ethnicity: Identity, Conflict Crisis*, op.cit.

[9] Kumar David, *'Sri Lanka: is there a way out?', Capital and Class*, Number 40, Spring 1990.

[10] Clive Y. Thomas, op.cit., 80-81.

[11] The Glossary of Louis Althusser's For Marx, New Left Review Editions, London, 1977, provides the following explanation prepared by the translator Ben Brewester:

'OVERDETERMINATION: Freud used this term to describe (among other things) the presentation of the dream-thoughts in images privileged by their condensation of a number of thoughts in a single image, or the transference of psychic energy from a particular potent thought to apparently trivial images. Althusser uses the same term to describe the effects of the contradictions in each practice constituting the social formation as a whole, and hence back on each practice and each contradiction, defining the pattern of dominance and subordination, antagonism and non-antagonism of the contradictions in the structure in dominance at any given historical moment. More precisely, the overdetermination of a contradiction is the reflection in it of its conditions of existence within the complex whole, that is, of the other contradictions in the complex whole, in other words its uneven development'.

[12] Zachary T. Irwin, 'Yugoslavia and ethnonationalists', in *'Ethnic Separatism and World Politics', ed. Fredric L. University Press of America, Lanham, 1984, pp. 107,109,119.*

[13] *Bipan Chandra op.cit., p. 10 footnotes.*

[14] *Clive Y. Thomas, op.cit., p. xx.*

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THE SUB-CONTINENTAL SCENE

Rise of Communalist Forces As Congress Suffers Poll Defeat

by T.N. Gopalan

As had been widely expected, the Cong-I has suffered serious electoral reverses in the Assembly elections in Maharashtra and Gujarat in the western India, but it did score a surprise victory in Orissa. There has been some immediate fall-out – Prime Minister Narasimha Rao's strongest support K. Karunakaran had to bow out as the Chief Minister of Kerala in an attempt to refurbish the image of the Cong-I-led coalition ministry in that state and Finance Minister Manmohan Singh has been forced to come down from his high horse and reach out to the poor through some populist schemes in his budget for 1995-96.

Depending on the outcome of the polls in the violence-ridden Bihar – completed in the last week of March – the pressure on Narasimha Rao to restructure the party and administration might increase. But even of greater concern will be the future of the polity itself, as has been noted in these columns earlier, if there is no checking the Cong-I's relentless decline. As also of course the rise of the saffron power.

The blow to the party in Maharashtra, the most industrialised state in the country, was indeed shattering and also ominous, though not altogether unexpected. The Cong-I could bag only eighty seats in the 288-member Assembly. The Hindu fundamentalist Shiv Sena-BJP combine triumphed, winning 138 seats between them – though the tally was a few seats still short of absolute majority, it was clear that the Hindu fanatics had arrived in one of the most modern states in India.

For reasons best known to himself, Mr. Sharad Pawar, the outgoing Chief Minister, known as a consummate manipulator, decided against attempting to wean away any of the independents – 45 of them have been elected, most of the Cong-I rebels – and the Shiv Sena-led alliance came to power.

The Shiv Sena is the more rabid of the two parties and is never ashamed of its communal stance unlike its partner which would like to cover up its anti-Muslim predilections with high-falutin sentiments of patriotism, integrity of the nation and so on. It is almost apologetic about its communal thrust in an attempt to win over those sections which are not too much enamoured by the anti-Muslim cries of the revanchist groups.

The Shiv Sena, it may be recalled here, started off in the early seventies as basically an anti-Tamil outfit, based in Bombay, charging that the Tamil migrants were cornering a lot of jobs, adding a lot of pressure on space in the state capital, thus making life extremely difficult for the native Marathi-speaking population. Though it did achieve some success initially, it failed to make much of an inroad at that time.

But when there was a resurgence of the Hindu revivalist forces in the North in the eighties, the Shiv Sena led by its venom-spewing supremo Bal Thackeray, gleefully jumped into the communal bandwagon and it has never looked back since then.

It is anti-Muslim, anti-Dalit and anti-backward castes. It was in the forefront of the anti-Muslim riots in Bombay in the wake of the demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya. The BJP, though a much bigger party and is even nursing ambitions of capturing power at the centre, thought it prudent to become a junior partner in the alliance and not rub the Sena on the wrong side whatever the provocation and kept humouring the eccentric Thackeray. The strategy has paid dividends now and the flag of Hindu fundamentalism is flying high in this part of the country.

Apart from the corruption of the Pawar regime, the rising unemployment, and the rebellion in the Cong-I ranks, the endless harassment of the Muslims in the wake of the serial blasts in Bombay is generally supposed to have turned the tide against the Cong-I. The minorities decided to teach a lesson to the party which, while paying lip-service to secularism, actually undermined them.

Conceding as much, Pawar noted in a press conference later on, that his party could win only three of the 44 seats where the minorities accounted for more than 15 of the electorate.

What will happen to the Muslims now is anybody's guess. Already there is talk of detecting and deporting more than 40,000 refugees from Bangladesh residing in Bombay and who have 'surreptitiously acquired citizenship' – meaning ration cards – and restricting the crowds in mosques spilling over into the streets.

In the neighbouring Gujarat, the BJP, on its own, scored an even more crushing victory, bagging more than two-thirds of the seats in the 182-member Assembly. The Cong-I could win only in 46 constituencies.

Though here too corruption and incompetence had characterised the outgoing Cong-I regime, the communal card did play a more important role than in Maharashtra. The BJP had many hot-heads from the Viswa Hindu Parishad (VHP, notionally responsible for the Masjid demolition and now banned) campaigning for it. The Gujarat electorate is believed to be highly communalised. Besides the harassed minorities here too were angry with the pseudo-secularist concerns of the Cong-I.

Though the campaign in both the states was shorn of any high-voltage attacks on the minorities and the speakers concentrated on the omissions and commissions of the governments in power because of the Seshan code, it is pointless to pretend as many of the media pundits are doing, that the results are merely a reflection of the anti-establishment sentiments of the electorate and that they do not signal a dangerous resurgence of rabid, intolerant and irresponsible fascist forces.

However, surely, it was the anti-establishment mood which tilted the scales against the Janata Dal in Orissa. The ageing Dal leader Biju Patnaik – whose government was unseated – had squandered away his popularity through many of his whimsical and autocratic actions. The Cong-I and the BJP being the other two tendencies – was a casualty of the current round of elections.

What is going to happen in the almost ungovernable state of Bihar – which sends as many as 54 MPs to the Lok Sabha and is perhaps the most backward of all the states in the country – is anybody's guess. Elections are being postponed time and again in many constituencies because of the reign of terror unleashed by some Maoist groups there. Even otherwise it always sets the pace for booth-capturing and other rigging tactics.

Some observers claim that the upper castes have ganged up against the minorities and the backward castes who find their champion in Chief Minister Laloo Prasad Yadav and that

the Cong-I might benefit in the process.

But the fact remains that as on date that the Cong-I stands badly mauled, none of the four metropolitan centres, Bombay, Calcutta, New Delhi and Madras, is under its control and so is the case with other important capitals like Hyderabad, Bangalore, Patna and so on. If the Cong-I fails to revitalize itself and its economic reforms continue to pile up problems for the weaker sections, the party could be in for a major rout in the Lok Sabha elections – a hung parliament and with a communal BJP dominating the scene could be the net outcome.

It is in this context the resignation of the Kerala Chief Minister – K. Karunakaran, target of charges of corruption and high-handedness – referred to earlier and the 'voter-friendly' budget of Manmohan Singh acquire significance. It may be recalled here that Prime Minister Rao has all along maintained that the rejection of the Cong-I by the electorate in several states has nothing to do whatsoever with his government's economic policies. Apparently he has realised that economic-policies-as-if-people-do-not-matter could boomerang on him and his party whatever their long-term impact on the nation might be.

And so this time his finance minister announced several new schemes for the rural poor and sharp reduction in the indirect taxes on several items of mass consumption.

One million subsidised houses for the Dalits, Scheduled Tribes and freed bonded labourers, old age pension of Rs. 75 per month, lump-sum survivor benefits to the poorer households on the death of the primary breadwinner, pre- and post-natal care to women, rural social insurance and even a nationwide midday meal scheme are among the carrots dangled before the rural electorate.

Even the middle classes will stand to benefit, what with his increasing the ceiling for eligibility to pay income tax, reduction in tariff on paper, electronic goods, textiles, cosmetics, plastic products, etc.

However, Singh has reiterated his commitment for reforms by lowering the peak import duty, unveiling measures to open up the insurance sector to the multi-nationals and generally reducing import duty on a variety of items.

The Cong-I dissidents are still lying low, though there are some stirrings here and there. Things could burst into the open in a couple of months. Right now the Cong-I continues to drift aimlessly.

TAMIL NADU NEWSLETTER

Innocents Victimised Following Jail Break by LTTE Suspects

by T.N. Gopalan, Madras

Seven LTTE detainees and two from a south Indian based Tamil extremist group escaped from the Madras Central Prison on the night of February 27, setting off a chain reaction in which innocent Lankan Tamil refugees and inmates of all the prisons in the state have come to suffer badly in the hands of the government of Tamil Nadu.

While it is indeed understandable that the anti-AIADMK opposition should seek to capitalise on an event like that, it is puzzling that the Tiger cadres or whoever is connected with them should carry out their plan of action time and again with little thought as to the fall-out of whatever they do.

To go back to the daring venture itself, six persons arrested from M.V. Tongonova, an LTTE trawler, in November 1991, another an Indian allegedly involved in making of a submersible boat for the LTTE in 1993, another from the Tamizhar Viduthalai Padai and another, also a local Tamil involved in a gun-running incident, were the ones to escape.

Incidentally all the nine of them had been detained under the Terrorists and Anti-Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA).

Their *modus operandi*, as described by the jail authorities, was ridiculously simple.

They were supposed to have hitched some bedsheets together, improvised a hook which dug into the top of the compound wall and to which the bedsheet chain was attached and then they scaled the eight metre high compound wall and jumped down the other side to safety.

Evidently there has been a collusion between the detenus and prison authorities at some level or other. This has been made much of by the opposition in order to insinuate the prison personnel had done so only at the instance of the state government itself, which, in turn, they said, had struck a deal with the LTTE.

Thereafter a massive manhunt was launched and two of the Tongonova crew were re-arrested the very next day near a Lankan Tamil refugee camp, 50 km from the city and a third member bit into a cyanide capsule at the time of arrest and died.

Within a couple of days the body of the 'submarine expert' was supposed to have been found floating on the Cooum river behind the Central Prison. The other five are still at large.

The press is having a field day, churning out wild speculations including the storming of another jail, this one wherein the accused in the Rajiv assassination case are detained, by those who had escaped besides of course more assassinations of anti-LTTE politicians. The latter, for their part, are charging that the Chief Minister Jayalalitha is simply intimidating the centre – 'by arranging such escapes, she is only warning the centre that she too could hit back if it had any dirty designs over her government. . .'.

In this maelstrom of such accusations and counter-accusations, no one has stopped for a moment to take into account the fact that seven of the ecapees had been serving time for over four years now, with no verdict in sight since their trial proceedings are agonisingly slow. Especially the Tongonova crew should have been wondering what crime they had been guilty of – their boat had been apprehended off the Indian boundaries. When detained under the TADA, one does not have a chance of being released on bail, except rarely. That kind of a situation should be highly frustrating to youngsters and drive them to acts of desperation.

Secondly whether all of them were active members of the LTTE is still a moot point. Organisations like the Thamizhar Viduthalai Padai mysteriously come up and dies down as required by the Tamil Nadu police and could well be their own brain-child.

This correspondent has visited the central prison and has had occasions to interact with the TADA detenus of different kinds and can assert that many of them are victims of a witch-hunting regime.

It is also a fact that they used to enjoy a relative freedom of movement, definitely freer inside the premises than the other undertrials or convicts. In the absence of such a safety valve one would have seen more desperate acts than what happened on February 28.

Continued on page 26

Continued from page 25

In a rear-guard action, the state government came down heavily on all the inmates of all the prisons in the state, imposing all kinds of restrictions on their movements, interactions with the visitors and so on.

Easily the most brutal reaction was the merciless attack on the other inmates of the Madras Central Prison following the escape – as many as 87 of them sustained injuries in the process. A judge of the Designated Court (enquiring into the TADA cases) who visited the Central Prison, following a directive from the High Court on a prayer from the People's Union for Civil Liberties, said some of the prisoners were not willing to disclose the injuries sustained by them due to fear of repression by the jail authorities.

'Most of the injured had linear or extensive contusions on several parts of the body, lathi or rod marks, multiple abrasions, bruises and many had complained of head and abdominal pain', reported the judge. Such was the extent of the brutality that the High Court at Madras, which has generally tended to remain stoic towards all kinds of administrative and police excesses in the name of security and integrity of the state, was constrained to openly say that it was 'disturbed' over the turn of events and it also granted interim bail to some of the more seriously injured.

Inmates of prisons all over the state have been repeatedly protesting the almost inhuman restrictions placed on their movements, contrivances to prevent them meeting face to face visitors, and so on but to no avail thus far.

Neither the courts nor the politicians nor yet the media are suitably impressed. What matters to them is only that Tigers have escaped, as had a few others in the past – so they are all vying with each other to whip up a hysteria over the issue.

They are all so carried away by their rage, real or put on, that even the instances of escape of some refugees from the special camps are being connected with the Tigers.

As an upshot of it all evermore severe restrictions have been placed on the movements of the inmates of the refugee camps and the relocation of those detained in the special camps have been given up for now.

It may be recalled here that the special camps were set up back in 1990 by the then Karunanidhi regime as part of its efforts to prove its 'patriotic bonafides' and ward off dismissal by the Chandrashekhar regime in the centre and that though the special camps were supposed to accommodate only militant groups and their families, any number of innocent refugees had been detained in those camps, just to make the number look impressive.

Things became worse after the Rajiv assassination and more people found themselves in the special camps under the Jayalalitha regime.

The special camps are nothing but prisons, conditions being even more degrading in them. Following the strenuous efforts of some human rights organisations, the National Human Rights Organisation visited a couple of special camps in December last and directed that non-militant detenus be relocated in the normal refugee camps.

Very reluctantly the government set about the process, releasing 200 persons from the Vellore camp and 25 from Chengalpattu camp – 200 more remain in the former and 75 in the latter – and a few others from a couple of other smaller camps in the state. They have been relocated in the normal camps though they are all being forced to opt for repatriation at the earliest.

Anyway the process has come to an abrupt halt, evidently because of the changed situation in the state. Also even in the normal camps more restrictions have been imposed on the movement of the refugees. Observes Mr. S.C. Chandrahasan, heading a leading refugee organisation 'I would not like to comment upon the Tiger activities in the island in the course of the struggle. But I wish they desist from doing anything on this soil which makes the life of the innocent refugees evermore difficult. . . '.

Meanwhile more than 8,000 refugees are being repatriated to the island in the current phase, leaving around 55,000 persons in the camps. Around 900 persons, most of them belonging to the EPRLF, and put up in a special camp near Madras, are pressing for immediate repatriation.

In other developments Pattali Makkal Katchi founder Dr. Ramdas and some other leaders of the party were brutally lathicharged when they attempted to take out a procession protesting the TADA Act, provoking stoning and burning of buses in some parts of northern districts of the state.

A DMC meeting addressed by former Minister Nanjil K. Manoharan was disrupted by some AIADMK thugs in Bodi in southern Tamil Nadu. Chief Minister Jayalalitha has defended both the actions, saying that victims had invited such attacks on their heads through their provocative speeches or defying prohibitory orders as the case may be.

Protests over the incidents are snowballing.

Continued from page 19

power in 1977 on these principles. It enacted in 1978 the current constitution, introducing for the first time Executive Presidential rule in which the powers of the President were overwhelmingly excessive and supreme. The first President, in fact, boasted about his powers openly saying that he could under the vested power do anything, except change the sex of a citizen. He even introduced himself to former US President Ronald Reagan as the 193rd Head of State dating back to the first Sinhalese Monarch. He portrayed the democracy in Sri Lanka to be a '5-Star Democracy' and the government to be unique adhering to the principles of dharma. The undemocratic and authoritarian actions, including the violations of human rights, of his and successive governments are now well known. The fear of reprisal that prevailed then under Sri Lankan democracy, prevented effectively any open dissent against the social and economic crimes of those in powerful positions by citizens acting either individually or collectively. Accountability of the elected rulers to the people, an underlying principle of democracy was ignored, the consequences of which were the widespread misuse of public funds and corruption that permeated all levels of governments. The political system that prevailed in the recent past in Sri Lanka can be succinctly stated as pseudo-democracy.

(To be continued).

Continued from page 7

until April 19 for the government to respond. In so doing, the LTTE leader welcomed the positive decisions made by the President with regard to lifting of the economic embargo including fuel and restrictions on fishing. Raising the issue of the army camp at Pooneryn and 'the question of freedom of mobility of our armed cadre in the Eastern province', the LTTE leader's letter stated that 'the resolution of these issues is of crucial importance for the stabilisation of conditions of peace, for the restoration of normalcy and for the promotion of peace negotiations'. He also suggested 1 April as the date for the fourth round of talks.

In subsequent correspondence between the parties, it was agreed that the fourth round of talks would take place on 10 April. These talks and the consequent decisions taken by President Kumaratunga would appear to have brought the peace process back on track.

BOOK REVIEW

Spectres of Fundamentalism in the Sub-Continent : The Hindu Imperative

HINDU,HINDI,INDIA (in Tamil) by S.V. Rajadurai, Manivasagar Press, Madras, India. 1993 : Reviewed by: N. Shanmugaratnam.

'What common need did these outstanding thinkers have that was at the same time not felt by ordinary people, even of their own class? They all belonged to the leisure class of what, for lack of a better term, may be called Hindus.'

– Kosambi (1962) on the influence of the Bhagavad Gita on Gandhi, Tilak and other leading political and spiritual figures.

South Asia is home for many cultures and civilisations. British colonialism unified a vast territory of pre-colonial India under a centralised colonial Indian state for its own imperial purposes of subjugation and exploitation. But its mission had an unconscious side. For colonialism also created the conditions for the birth and growth of modern nationalism in the periphery. In the early phases of the struggle for independence, Indian nationalism appeared to be a unifying ideology across religious divides, particularly the divide between Hindus and Muslims. However, with time the Hindu-Muslim division developed into a conflict which led to the bloody partitioning of India to create an Islamic Pakistan in 1947 on the eve of independence. Later in 1970, East Pakistan seceded to become Bangladesh. The rise of Islamic fundamentalism in the subcontinent in recent years is well known to the outside world. But, in December 1992, many in the West were aghast at the destruction of a 16th century mosque in Ayodhya in North India by Hindu militants, with the acquiescence of the Indian police, and at the anti-Muslim violence that ensued. It was neither meditation nor a dance of 'Hare Krishna' with which many a westerner associated Hinduism. It was Hindu fundamentalism in its most barbaric form. Not to be outdone by the Hindu hoodlums, Muslim fanatics reacted violently in Pakistan and Bangladesh by attacking Hindu temples and families.

The Hindu fundamentalists had their own reason to choose the mosque at Ayodhya as their target. Ayodhya is the birth place of the warrior hero Ram of Ramanayana, the ancient Hindu epic. In their quest for a militant symbol, the Hindu fundamentalists have chosen Ram who was born in the warrior Ksaitrya caste as 'the Hindu god'. A dancing Siva, or an elephant-faced, pot-bellied yet affable Ganesh, or a romantic flute-playing yet intellectually bright Krishna of low caste origin, would not fit the fundamentalist bill. After making Ram their god, they invented the myth that his birth place was exactly where the mosque stood. They succeeded in making many people believe the story. Ayodhya is their answer to Mecca and Vatican. The Hindu fundamentalists, who are for a Ram Raj (Kingdom of Ram) in India, claim that the essence of the Indian heritage is Hindutva. Even though the ruling Congress Party has distanced itself from the fundamentalists, its own commitment to secularism continues to be questioned by critics.

The book under review by S.V. Rajadurai, a Marxist intellectual from the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu, deals with the larger historical and political setting in which Hindu fundamentalism operates. Rajadurai's purpose in writing the book with the powerful title **Hindu-Hindi-India** is to expose the complex nature of what is commonly regarded as Indian nationalism.

India, argues S.V. Rajadurai, was first imagined as a 'nation' by the English educated Brahmin and other upper caste intellectual elite, who played leading roles in the Indian Congress, and then made into a reality by the Brahmin-Bania alliance within a politico-geographic framework inherited from British colonialism. The imagining of the 'Indian nation' was enabled by Brahminism, which provided a unifying ideology across ethnic divides among the Hindus, and the economic power of the domestic big capitalists who came mostly from the Bania caste to which Gandhi belonged. With this thesis and a painstaking analysis to defend it, Rajadurai challenges the secularist claims of the ruling Congress Party and the Indian government. The question that concerns him is not one of accepting of rejecting the geographic framework of India set by the colonialists but that of the political, economic and ideological contents of the whole concept of India as it has been shaped over the past decades by the ruling coalition of upper classes and castes. The book is a timely and important contribution to ongoing debates in India on the national question, secularism and the future of India as a multinational country.

The author traces the influence of the Hindu fundamentalist movement, which has a history of seven decades, on the great official project of creating a pan-Indian consciousness. He assesses the ideological positions and practices of several key leaders of the Indian Congress such as Gandhi, Nehru, Golwalker and Tilak, and provides a comparative evaluation of Gandhi and Ambedkhar. He exposes the casteism of the Congress establishment while occasionally attacking the main Communist Parties of India for their lack of deep interest in the problems of depresed castes and tribal peoples. All these are undertaken as integral parts of the book's main analytical project of showing the politically engineered evolution of an organic trinity called 'Hindu-Hindi-India'. Indeed, Rajadurai compares this trinity to a trident which, in the hands of the Indian ruling classes, serves the exploitation of labouring people and the oppression of the Dalits (depressed castes) and women.

Reviewing the etymology of 'India', Rajadurai points out that the word originated from Indus, the term coined and used by the Greeks to refer to the plains of Sindh. It was subsequently borrowed by the Arabs who referred to the region as India and its non-Islamic inhabitants as Hindus. Thus the words India and Hindu are not of 'Indian' origin. With the occupation of parts of India by different colonial powers at different times there came into being Dutch, French and British Indias. In the British days, the vast territory was divided into British India and Princely States. In 1947, came the violent partitioning of India and the birth of Pakistan. It was after independence that the remaining erstwhile British India and the Princely States were amalgamated to form the Indian union. So, the Indian union is still a young republic which was established in a region with some of the oldest civilisations in the world. It is a union of about 900 million people speaking hundreds (more than 1500) of languages and dialects and belonging to several religions and sects including Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Jainism, Christianity, Sikhism and animism.

Rajadurai goes into the history of the 'Union versus Federation' debate and points out that the Indian big bourgeoisie were always opposed to

Continued on page 28

Continued from page 27

the creation of linguistic states and a federation based on them. They backed the idea of a centralised India so that they could have free access to an enormous home market and its resources. They had, of course, recognised long ago the hegemonist potentials of Brahminism as an ideology to cement a Hindu unity across languages, castes, customs and territories and build a pan-Indian consciousness long before the Indian independence movement and the birth of the Union. As the highest and the learned priestly caste in a 'god-ordained world' they enjoyed a 'natural' intellectual hegemony over the other castes as they were the mediators between people and god, and they spoke to god in god's own language, Sanskrit! As an ideological enterprise Brahminism has been dynamic and cunning enough to adopt some of the key values of world views like Buddhism and Jainism that challenged its fundamentals and hegemony; for instance it internalised the Buddhist (and Jainist) precepts of ahimsa (non-violence) and abstinence from consumption of meat and other non-vegetables. Historically, in the Indian cultural context, recognition and blessing by the priestly caste were indispensable for a king to legitimise his rule over his subjects. The traditional pan-Indian consciousness and high status of the Brahmins placed them in a unique position to become the ideologues of Indian nationalism in the British period. This transition was made possible by the spread of English education, print capitalism and modern political institutions, and, of course, by the existence of a centralised colonial Indian state. The bilingual (English & the native tongue) Brahminist intellectuals created the concept of the Indian nation by combining traditional religious and other social symbols and values with the ideas of a free India and Bharat.

Even Nehru, who was in favour of linguistic states and federation during the independence struggle, sided with the big capitalists in 1947 for a more centalised Union. The support base for the Union came from the Hindi-belt which covered the major part of North India. However, it was not Hindi but Hindustani – which is a mixture of Hindi and Urdu – that was preferred by Gandhi as the state language as he believed that it signified the unity of Hindi-speaking Hindus and Urdu-speaking Muslims. Even Gandhi could not accept the idea that there could be more than one state language for the whole of India. The Hindu nationalists who dominated the Congress were able to sideline Gandhi's proposition. They stood for a more thoroughly Sanskritised Hindi as the official language of all India and had their way. For them Sanskrit represented the golden era of Hindu civilisation. After all, though it died centuries ago, Sanskrit is the language of the vedas and ancient classics. The sanskritisation of Hindi meant its Brahminisation and the devaluation and exclusion of Hindustani and other languages. It meant the reinforcement of the ideological hegemony of Brahminism. The already 'holy' hegemony gained extra sanctity when Sanskrit was recognised as a language along with several living Indian languages by the country's Constitution.

It emerges from the author's analysis that the demand for a separate state for Muslims originated as a reaction to the rising hegemony of Brahminism, the intolerance of Hindu nationalism and the open support of the Hindu capitalists to the fundamentalist movement. Even though some Islamic fundamentalist ideas were widespread in the Muslim community, there is no evidence of Muslim businessmen providing financial support and other forms of patronage to any Islamic movement until the 1930s. By this time, Muslim businessmen had begun to feel that their future economic prospects were not bright as they were circumscribed by the rising political power of the Hindu capitalists. They formed the Muslim Chamber of Commerce in 1932 and after 1939 Muslim business groups began to actively support the Muslim League. However, as observed by Rajadurai, the Hindu big business groups were also in favour of partitioning India to create the Pakistan demanded by the Muslim League headed by Jinnah. Birla, the leading Hindu industrialist was openly supporting the division saying that it was the only way to avoid continuous bloodshed and go about with the business of developing the Indian economy. He also argued that all the Muslim leaders in the Congress were for Pakistan, which was untrue as an eminent leader like Moulana Azaad (who was a Muslim) stood firmly for a united India and fought for it.

The partition did not result in an India without Muslims. Nor did it mean the end of Hindu-Muslim conflicts or of Hindu nationalism in India. Today, there are more Muslims in India than in Pakistan. The relations between India and Pakistan have always been tense and the two countries have gone to war on more than one occasion. Within India, Hindu fundamentalism has been gaining ground by pointing at the 'Pakistani threat' and at the rising tide of Islamic fundamentalism everywhere including India. The phenomenal rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party in North India in the late 1980s and the demolition of the Babri mosque in Ayodhya by Hindu militants showed that Hindu fundamentalism has become more organised and powerful in post-Independence India even though it has been declared a secular state by the constitution.

Rajadurai makes the point that the institutionalisation of the 'Hindu-Hindi-India' ideology has continuously been resisted by several ethnic groups within the Union as it threatens their aspirations for nationhood; for example the Nagas, Sikhs, Assamese, Manipurians, and Tamils. It has been resisted by millions of Dalits (depressed castes) and tribals who have been condemned to be underdogs by Hinduism and its social order. The book presents an excellent critical assessement of Ambedkhar who is regarded as the Abraham Lincoln of India's Dalits who were named Harijans (children of god) by Gandhi. Ambedkhar, a brilliant thinker devoted his life to the political and social upliftment of the Dalits. Ambedkhar was actively involved in the freedom struggle along with Gandhi, Nehru and others but had the interests of the Dalits above all others in his heart. He rejected Hinduism and finally chose Buddhism, although he found Marx's theory of class and critique of capitalism appealing, as he did not believe in a violent path to socialism. It has been pointed out by Gore (1993) that Ambedkhar's world view was based on the liberal values of individual freedom, social equality and fraternity. Ambedkhar's critique of the Hindu as a person without a conscience appears to be rooted in his libertarian philosophical beliefs buttressed by a class analysis. He regarded the Hindu social practice as utterly reprehensible as it was a 'class ethics' that deprived moral life of freedom and spontaneity and individual conscience. He was disillusioned with the Gandhian approach to the caste problem. Gandhi never rejected the vedic hierarchy of society into four varunas Brahmin, Ksaitrya, Vaisya and Sudra. He sought harmony within the traditional order by fighting to eliminate untouchability, whereas Ambedkhar stood for an end to the ancient casteist order and for genuine democratisation. On many occasions, Ambedkhar attacked Gandhi's double role as Mahatma and politician. To quote one of Ambedkhar's caustic remarks:

Continued on page 33

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MATRIMONIAL

Jaffna Hindu brothers and sisters, *British citizens, seek suitable groom for sister, 32, fair, employed in computing in Colombo. Send horoscope, details. M 779 c/o Tamil Times.*

Hindu family *seeks female partner for qualified accountant, 40, innocent divorcee, UK permanent resident. Send recent photograph, horoscope. M 781 c/o Tamil Times.*

Jaffna Hindu brother *seeks partner for attractive sister holding office job in London, 34, 5'2". Replies treated confidentially. Send full details. M 782 c/o Tamil Times.*

Brother, Finance controller, *seeks partner for talented sister, 43, employed in Colombo. Jaffna Hindu vegetarian preferred. Contact in confidence, S.K. Thiru, CDI Group, 7/2 Skeleton Road, Colombo 5. Tel: 502126.*

Divorced Hindu Tamil, *in permanent professional employment in UK seeks suitable bride up to 36 years. No encumbrances. Send details and horoscope. M 784 c/o Tamil Times.*

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Jaffna Hindu parents *seek educated bride for son, 26, electronic engineer in employment in London, British citizen. Send horoscope. details. M 786 c/o Tamil Times.*

Jaffna Hindu parents *seek bride for their son, 28, hotel manager, prestigious hotel, Sun City, South Africa. M 787 c/o Tamil Times.*

Jaffna Hindu sister *seeks bride, age 25 to 30, for brother, systems analyst in Australia. Send horoscope, details. M 788 c/o Tamil Times.*

Jaffna Hindu parents *seek educated, fair bride for son, 29, senior computer analyst, British citizen. Send horoscope, details. M 789 c/o Tamil Times.*

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We congratulate the following couples on their recent wedding.

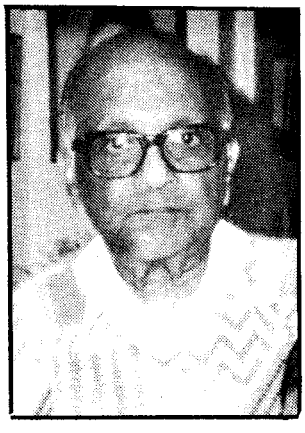
Mohanraj *son of Mr. & Mrs. M. Krishnamoorthy of 28 Vimiera Road, Eastwood NSW 2122, Australia and* **Sashi Cala** *daughter of Mr. & Mrs. T. Sivasubramaniam of 19 Anderson Road, Northmead NSW 2152, Australia on 25.3.95 at Our Lady of Lebanon Hall, Alice Street, Sydney, Australia.*

Aravindhan *son of the late Mr. S. Nadarajah and Mrs. L. Nadarajah of 75 Endsleigh Court, Lexden, Colchester, U.K. and* **Sri Ranjini** *daughter of Dr. & Dr. (Mrs.) S. Suntharalingam of 17 Ashdown Drive, Wordsley, Stourbridge, West Midlands, U.K. on 25.3.95 at Lakhamshi Virpal Hall, Coopers Lane Road, Northaw, U.K.*

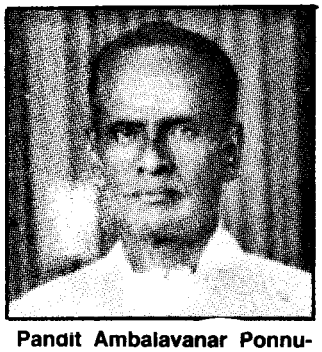
Sanjayen *son of Mr. & Mrs. S.P Rajanathan of 1580 Sandhurst Circle, Apt. 1512, Scarborough, Ontario M1V 2L3, Canada and* **Revathy** *daughter of the late Mr. Mahesan and Mrs. K. Mahesan on 2.4.95 at Malvern Community Centre, Scarborough, Canada.*

Visakhan *son of Dr. & Mrs. Sanmuganathan of 146/24 Havelock Road, Colombo 5 and* **Kosala** *daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Kandasamy of 34 Hamer's Avenue, Colombo 6 on 12.4.95 at Miami Hotel, Colombo 6.*

OBITUARIES

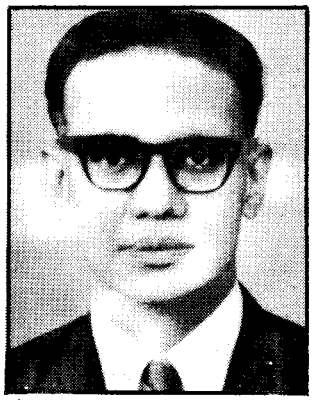


Subramaniam Chelliah, *beloved husband of Loheswari; father of Lohendran and Nirmalendran; father-in-law of Priyadharshani and Anna and grandfather of Danusha, Athisa, Rishan, Philippe and Rohaan passed away peacefully after a long illness on 21.3.95. He also leaves behind a brother Ponniah (Toronto); sisters Saraswathy, Maheswary, Pancharathneswary (Tellippalai, Sri Lanka), Rajeswary (UK); brothers-in-law Rajathurai, Dr. Raj Chandran (UK); sisters-in-law Mrs. Maheswari Cookathasan (UK), Mrs. Rajeswari Pulendra (Vathiry, Sri Lanka) and Mrs. Buaneswari Thurairatnam (UK) and all their families. The members of the family thank all friends and relations in UK and abroad, who sent messages of sympathy and helped in numerous ways and participated in the funeral rites on 25.3.95. – 11 Brent Park Road, London NW4 3HN. Tel: 0181 202 9035.*



Pandit Ambalavanar Ponnudurai *(83), Retired Principal of Velanai; beloved husband of Nagarathinam, retired teacher; loving brother of late Mangaiyatkarasi Sellapah and Sinnarasa (Madras); loving father of Nageswary (Colombo), Kalyanasundram (Jaffna), Kamaladevi (Colombo), Prof. Balasundrampillai (University of Jaffna), Dr. Vimalendran, Balendran, Vimaladevi (all of Canada), Yogendran, Raveendran, Puvanendran (all of UK), Nirmaladevi (Canada) and late Vathsaladevi; father-in-law of Thirunavukkarasu, Parameswary, Tharmalingam, Rajaluxmi, Mangaiyatkarasi, Umakanthi, Vijayakumar, Vanaja, Anushiya, Ranjinidevi and Logaraj; grandfather of Niji, Vithya, Sathabhanu, Janagan, Jeyanthi, Muraleetharan, Janarthan, Suthakaran, Senthuran, Ganeshavarathan, Chanjithkumar, Gajendrakumar, Arthee, Vamanan, Anabbayan, Anchala, Hariharan and Arjun passed away in Jaffna on 20.2.95 and was cremated on 22nd February. The members of the family thank all friends and relatives who sent messages of sympathy and condoled with them at this time of great sorrow. – 37 Burnham Road, Dartford DA1 5AY. Tel: 01322 280 685.*

IN MEMORIAM



In everloving memory of **Mr. Vellupillai Nadarajah,** *formerly Director, Ceylon School of Social Work, son of the late Mr. & Mrs. Velupillai of Chetty Street, Nallur, Sri Lanka, son-in-law of the late Mr. K. Muthulingam and Mrs. Muthulingam of Tellipallai, Sri Lanka, on the fourth anniversary of his passing away on 4.4.91.*

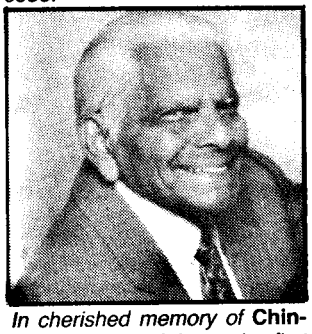
Sadly missed and fondly remembered by his beloved wife Muthu Ambikai; daughter Dr. Sakunthala; son Dr. Ravindran; son-in-law Dr. Suresh Thayalan; daughter-in-law Meera; grand children Arjun, Nisha and Sathya – 11 Baronia Croft, Highwoods, Colchester, Essex CO4 53F.

Mrs. Rasaratnam Sabapathy
Born: 16.11.1919
Died: 20.03.1994

Sadly missed and fondly remembered on the first anniversary of the passing away, by her daughters Nalayini, Vinothini, Malini, Premala, Kanageswary and Raji; her sons-in-law Rajan Sriskandarajah, Sarath Amarasekara, Sarva Isweran, Mathi Chandrakumar and Bobby Kanagadevan; her grandchildren Shamila, Shanika, Saiyanthan, Tharaka, Yalini, Arani, Roshini and Amuthan. – 49 Orchard Drive, Watford, Herts. WD1 3DX.

In loving memory of **Mr. Rajasingham Mahadeva** *on the twelfth anniversary of his passing away on 11.3.83.*

Greatly loved, deeply missed and always remembered by his beloved wife Kanagalakshmi; children Bobby, Kumudhini, Jayanthi and Nalini and his numerous relatives and friends. – 69 Streatfield Road, Harrow, Middx. HA3 9BP. Tel: 0181 907 6836.



In cherished memory of **Chinnathampy Rasiah** *on the first anniversary of his passing away on 24.4.94.*

How little we knew that morning
The sorrow that day would bring
The call was sudden, the shock severe
To part with the one we loved so dear.

Greatly loved, deeply missed and always remembered by his sorrowing wife Gunamany, sister Arianayagam, beloved children Dr. Rajan and Rajini, loving daughter-in-law Janaki, son-in-law Lakshman, grandchildren Thabojan, Prashanth and Sulakshan, sisters-in-law, nephews and nieces. – 14 Greenbriar Avenue, Wheelers Hill, Vic.3150 Melbourne, Australia / 3818 Campolindo Drive, Moraga 94556, California, U.S.A.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

May 1 *Feast of St. Joseph.*

May 2 *Feast of St. Anthanasius.*

May 3 *Feast of Sts. Philip & James; Sathurththi.*

May 6 *J.S.S.A. 7-A-Side Football Competition, 17 O.S.A.s taking part at Warren Farm Sports Centre, Windmill Lane, Southall, Middx. Tel: 0181 399 7848/743 8289/241 5881.*

May 11 *Eekathasi.*

May 12 *Pirathosam.*

May 13 *6.30pm Tamil Orphans' Trust presents Violin Duet by Ganesh and Kumaresh from India at Acton Town Hall, High Street, London W3. Tel: 0181 908 3540/575 6478.*

May 13 *7.30pm Castis/Sri Lanka-UK Friendship Society presents Ceilidh Dance in aid of Tamil Orphans of Sri Lanka at St. Edward's Paris Hall, Thurloe Street, Rushholme, Manchester. Tel: 0161 224 5019/ 860 4609.*

May 14 *Full Moon.*

May 14 *1.00pm S.C.O.T. Tamil New Year Lunch & Raffle at Wandsworth Town Hall, Civic Suite, Wandsworth High Street, London SW18 2PU. Tel: 0181 904 6472.*

May 18 *Sathurththi.*

May 20 *Feast of St. Bernadine of Siene.*

May 20 *6.30pm MIOT Annual Muthamil Vizha at Kelsey Park School, Manor Road, Beckenham, Kent. Tel: 01634 376517/0181 460 5235.*

May 25 *Eekathasi; Feast of the Ascension of Lord Jesus.*

May 26 *Pirathosam; Feast of St. Philip Neri.*

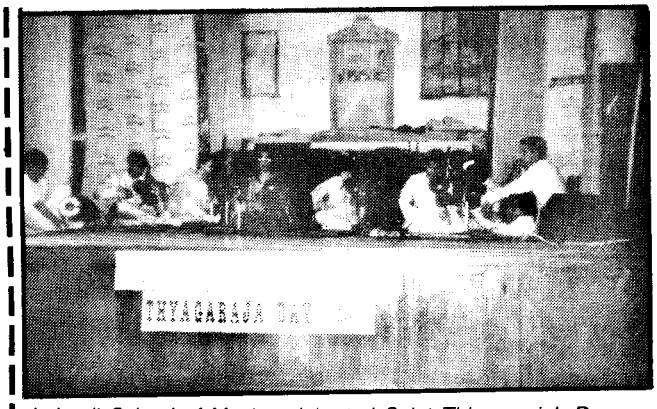
May 27 *Feast of St. Augustine of Canterbury.*

May 29 *Amavasai.*

May 30 *Feast of St. Ferdinand.*

May 31 *Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.*

Saint Thiyagarajah Day Celebrations



Lalgudi School of Music celebrated Saint Thiyagarajah Day on 11.3.95 at The Great Hall of Kingsbury High School.

The main item of the day was the presentation on the violin by five groups of students classified according to ability and each group presented an ensemble. It was well organised to bring out the talent of those who took part. In between the ensembles were presented recitals of vocal music, flute and Veena. Solo violin recitals by Arvind Jayan and Kumar Ragunathan stole the hearts of the audience with their excellent rendering. They have a bright future ahead of them.

The youngsters who provided mridangam support to all the events deserve praise. Presentation of Pancharatna Krithi on the violin by Dr. Lakshimi Jayan and her senior students crowned the evening's events.

Dr. S. Navaratnam, who was the Chief Guest gave a short speech which was well received by the audience. Dr. Lakshimi Jayan deserves to be congratulated for having done so well to inspire her students to attain a high standard of achievement. My greetings are due to Lalgudi School of Music.

N. Bramanandha.

At the Bhawan Centre, 4A Castletown Road, London W14 9HQ. Tel: 0171-381 3086/ 4608.

May 7 *6.30pm Violin duet by Ganesh & Kumaresh from India.*

May 14 *6.30pm Veena by Geetha Bennett.*

May 20 *7.00pm Sitar by Guarava Majumader.*

May 29 *6.30pm Santoor by Satish Vyas.*

Sabaratnam Nanthakumar – An Appreciation

The Thamil community of Western Canada and particularly British Columbians were deeply shocked by the untimely death of Mr. Nanthakumar after a brief illness on January 4th 1995. He was 48.

Mr. Nanthakumar was born in Jaffna, and had his early education at Jaffna Central College and at Stanley College. He was one of the pioneer students under the guidance of the Late Mr. Pathmanapan at Stanley. He completed his Chartered Accountancy in Colombo and began his career at the Eastern Paper Mills Corporation in 1971 and worked at the head office in Colombo from '78 to '82. Later he moved to Zambia with his family and worked till '88 before migrating to Canada. After a few years as the financial controller of a leading hotel organisation in Winnipeg in Central Canada he moved to Vancouver to estabish new developments of the business.

Mr. Nanthakumar popularly known as Nantha or Kumar was a soft spoken gentleman and made many friends where ever he was. He was a counsellor and a guide to several who had moved from Sri Lanka. Nantha was passionately involved in the religious and cultural activities of the Thamil communities. During his stay in Winnipeg, capital of the province of Manitoba he was the committee member of the Hindu Society of Manitoba and a member of the board of directors of The Thamil Cultural Association of Manitoba. In Vancouver, British Columbia he was an active member of the Sathya Sai Centre and one of the founder members of the Thamil Cultural Society of B.C. which was inaugurated in 1994.

Friends, colleagues, members of the different organisations salute Nantha for the services he had rendered unreservedly to others. The Thamil Community in B.C. will miss him but he had shown how humbly one can serve the community. For those who had been closely associated with him, it is indeed a privilege to have been in his company.

His funeral according to Hindu rites took place on January 8th at the Richmond funeral home amidst a large gathering of friends, family, colleagues and the members of the Thamil Community.

He leaves behind his beloved wife Dr.

Continued on page 32

Continued from page 31

Selvi Nanthakumar, daughters Shivaramya, Arathi, mother Mrs. G. Sabaratnam (U.K.); mother-in-law Mrs. S. Sabaratnam (B.C.); brothers Dr. Arulkumar (Singapore), Ratnakumar (Toronto), Gnanakumar (Calgary), Srikumar (U.K.) and their families.

May he rest in peace.

C.T.P.

Rajarajeswari Temple in Stoneleigh, Surrey

The consecration ceremony of a new Rajarajeswari Amman temple in Stoneleigh, Epsom, Surrey, UK took place on 5th April 1995 in the presence of a large gathering of devotees. The Temple is 2 minutes walking distance from the Stoneleigh Broadway B.R. Station. The main deity is Rajarajeswary with Vinayagar and Thiruchenthur Murugan on either side. The chief priest hails from Thiruvannamalai in South India.

The daily poojah times are 8.30am to 1.00pm and 6 to 9pm. The Sanga Abhisekham will take place on 21st May 1995 commencing at 9am. The address of the Temple is Dell Lane, off Dell Road, Stoneleigh, Epsom, Surrey and the telephone number is 0181 393 8147.

International Bharatha Natyam Contest

The New York Tamil Sangam is sponsoring a Bhartha Natyam Contest to be held on 9th September 1995 at 4.00pm in New Brunswick High School Auditorium, New Jersey, U.S.A. The best dancer will receive the **Balasaraswati Award** *of $1,000 and a plaque. The first runner-up will receive $500 and the second runner-up $300. Other finalists will also receive awards/prizes.*

The contest is open to girls/young ladies between 16 and 23 years on 9.9.95, residing outside India; must have completed Arangetram or Chalankai pujai or equivalent; only non-professionals are eligible; compositions are to be in Tamil and danced solo for at least 6 minutes and not exceeding 10 minutes and 30 seconds.

Those interested are requested to contact the Director of the contest, Mr. R. Kabaliswaran, 1379 Thomas Avenue, North Brunswick, NJ 08902, USA. Tel/Fax 908 940 0586 to receive an application form and other details.

Sangam Acquires Building

The Saiva Munnetta Sangam (UK) which has been on the look out for suitable premises to cater to the needs of the community has acquired a building at 2 Salisbury Road, Manor Park, London E12 6AB. The building consists of two floors, which includes a large area in the ground floor which could be used as a hall to accommodate around 500 people. The total floor area is approximately 8400 square feet. It has been bought for £120,000 and immediate essential repairs are estimated to cost in the region of £50,000. The members of the Sangam have already committed themselves to £10,000 of this amount and appeal to their supporters and well wishers to rise to the occasion and contribute the balance amount.

Carnatic Artistes Shine in Music Festival

An 'Eye on Shiva' Promotion presented a festival of carnatic music featuring artistes living in London titled 'Joy of South' on 4th March 1995 at the Studio Theatre Union Chapel, Compton Avenue, Islington, London N1. The promoters should be congratulated on having prevailed on some of the leading artistes in the U.K. to take part in this festival. The performance was co-promoted by the London Borough of Islington Arts and Heritage and funded by London Arts Board. The audience was predominantly non-Asian and the hall was packed to capacity.

The first item was a flute recital by **K. Jananayagam**, *who had started his musical training in 1952 with Tanjore Brahma Sri Mani Iyer and later from Maharajapuram Santhanam. He had recently performed at the World Music Festival in Holland. The next item was a vocal recital by* **Manorama Prasad**. *Manorama had trained in India under various Gurus from the age of 5 and had completed her study in 1989 under Prof. S. Ramanathan and Sri R.K. Padmanabha.*

The final item was a Veena duet by **Sangeetha Vidwans Sivatharini Sahathevan** *and* **Malini Thanabalasingam** *both from the Central College of Carnatic Music, Madras where they were under the tutelage of Kalai Mamani Professor K.P. Sivanantham.*

It is noteworthy that 14-year-old Thulasi Mohanadas, student of Sivatharini had performed on the Veena in the 'Rising Stars' section organised by the same promoters on 1st March.

The accompanists for the flute and vocal recitals were P. Gnanavaradan – Violin, Somasundra Desikar – Miruthangam, Bala Skandan – Gangira and Sithamparanathan – Morsing. Somasundra Desikar and Bala Skandan exchanged their instruments for the veena recital.

The entire programme was well received and during the four hour duration of the recitals the audience was treated to some of the best in carnatic music.

BOPIO International Asian Festival

The annual festival of the British Organisation of Persons of Indian Origin will take place in Blackheath in South East London on 24th and 25th June '95. The aim of the festival is to promote the culture and fine arts of the people of Indian origin. Artistes who wish to participate in the different fields of South Indian Music and Dance are requested to telephone 0181 248 0691.

CANADIAN NEWS LETTER

Housing

Yet another Non-Profit housing project has been approved for the Tamil Community in Ontario, making this the third social housing project of the Tamils. The proposed 80 unit apartment style development will be in Scarborough, an area with a high concentration of Sri Lankans.

This project is named 'Eelam Co-op Homes Inc.' and has a seven member board currently headed by an affable person in Sinnathamby Sittampalam 'Sither' as he is popularly called. The other members of the board are: Nadarajah Bhuvanendra, Vairamuttu Puvanachandran, Rohini Udayakumar, Perumalpillai Sri Krishner, Rajaretnam Gunanathan and Jeyamany Sri Bhawan.

Appointment

Rosalind Rajanayagam, a retired teacher and community activist has been appointed a Public Member of the College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario for a period of two years beginning in January 1995. Earlier she was associated with the Toronto Department of Public Health in the preparation of a report in 1990, on the Health and Social needs of the Tamil community in Toronto.

Rosalind was very closely associated with the establishment in 1988 of the first Tamil Co-op housing at Lansdowne. She was president of 'SACEM' for six years and presently serves as a director of the Senior Tamils' Centre of Ontario.

She is a member of the United Church of Canada and is one of those who helped to establish the newly formed Tamil Christian Church of Canada, that conducts its services in Scarborough.

Rajanayagams are some of the few families who settled in Canada nearly 35 years ago.

Aid to the Needy in Sri Lanka

A new organisation called the Canadian Relief Organisation for Peace (CROPS), has shipped in March this year, a container full of Wheel Chairs, Walkers, Crutches, Medicines, Nutrients etc., to Colombo for distribution by the 'Red Cross' to the needy in the North.

Chris Sandrasegara the Secretary of 'CROPS' was largely responsible for this praiseworthy effort.

The Senior Tamils' Centre of Ontario that annually donates money for relief work in the North East of Sri Lanka has remitted a sum of $750- to the TRO in London, for relief work in the North East, this year.

Institute of Tamil Culture – 9th Anniversary Celebrations

The Kingston Institute of Tamil Culture celebrated its 9th Annversary on 8.4.95 at Holy Cross Convent Hall, New Malden, Surrey with a capacity audience which enjoyed the items of Vocal and Instrumental Music, Bharatha Natyam and speeches in Tamil by students of the Institute. The Chief Guest was Cllr. Brian Bennet, Mayor of the Royal Borough of Kingston-Upon-Thames. Rt. Hon. Anita Pollack, M.E.P. London South West; Rt. Hon. Richard Tracy, M.P. for Surbiton and Rev. Sister Sheila, Provincial Superior of the Holy Cross Sisters in England graced the occasion as Guests of Honour.

Bharathanatyam Recital in Madras

The Sankarabaranam Trust and Bharatha Kanjali presented a Bharathanatyam recital by **Kumari Uma Rani,** *Disciple of Dhananjayans and Smt Radhika Suhrajit on 19.3.95 at Mylapore Fine Arts Club Hall, Madras. Kumari Uma Rani is a daughter of Mr & Mrs. Perampalam of 456 Ivy Wood Court. Madras.*

Continued from page 28

> As a Mahatma he may be trying to spiritualise politics. Whether he has succeeded in it or not, politics has certainly commercialised him. A politician must know that Society cannot bear the whole truth and that he must not speak the whole truth; if he is speaking the whole truth it is bad for politics. The reason why the Mahatma is always supporting Caste and Varuna is because he is afraid that if he opposed them he will lose his place in politics. Whatever the source of his confusion the Mahatma must be told that he is deceiving himself and also deceiving the people by preaching Caste under the name of Varuna.' (Cited in Gore 1993).

Rajadurai rightly points out that the philosophical and political writings of Ambedkhar deserve greater attention from people and movements struggling for social justice in South Asia.

The book concludes with a call for 'imagining' a new India which is truly pluralist (in the sense that all the diferent national, linguistic, religious and territorial groups have the freedom to enjoy and keep their identities), decentralised and socialist as an alternative to the 'Hindu-Hindi-India'. Rajadurai's style is provocative and his arguments are clearly formulated. However one would have liked to see more empirical evidence of the economic power of the Bania caste. Even though his critical support to the struggles of various communities in India for self-determination seems justifiable, the reader would have liked to know more about the key determinants that make such struggles progressive or reactionary. However, these inadequacies do not reduce the value of the book to the Tamil reader who is looking for a radical alternative interpretation of the origins and development of Indian nationalism.

Reference

M.S. Gore (1993)
The Social Context of an Ideology – Ambedkhar's Political and Social Thought. Sage Publications, New Delhi.

Bharatha Natya Arangetram in Paris

The Bharatha Natya Arangetram of Kayalvili, disciple of Guru Dayalasingam took place at Auditorium des Halles, Paris on 19.2.95. Dayalasingam is the Director of Narthanalayam School of Dance in Paris and is a student of Mrs. Leela Arumugiah and Adyar K. Lakshmanan.

It was a rare privilege for the Guru to have Mrs. Leela Arumugiah as the chief guest on this special occasion, which was well attended by Tamil and French art lovers residing in Paris. The orchestra consisted of Vocal – Mrs. Ambika Thamotheram (London), Mridangam – Sri Ravi Dharmaraj (Paris), Violin – Mrs. Komala Ramalingam (Paris), Flute – Sri K. Jananayagam (London).

Kayalvili is a very talented young dancer with a bright future.

Festival of Cricket – 29th May 1995

Tenders for the Printing of Souvenir etc.

Tenders for the printing of the Festival Souvenir and other F.O.C. matter are invited from those interested. Please ring the Chairman of Publications and Public Relations Sub-Committee, Mr. Jeyanathan Sivagnanadasan on: **0181 423 2202** *for tender documents which have to be submitted before a printer is selected.*

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7-A-Side Soccer Tournament

Saturday, 6th May 1995 from 9am

Venue: Warren Farm Sports Centre
Windmill Lane
Southall Middlesex

Participating Schools OSA

Chithampara College
Hartley College
Jaffna College
Jaffna Central College
Jaffna Hindu College
Kokuvil Hindu College
Mahajana College
Skanda Varodaya College
St. Henry's College
St. Johns College
St. Patricks College
St. Xavier's College, Mannar
Stanley College
Trincomalee Hindu College
Union College
Urumpirai Hindu College
Vavuniya Mahavidiyalam

Saturday, 29th July '95 – New Date

7-A-Side Cricket & Netball Tournaments

AND

7-A-Side Over 40 years Cricket Tournament

Contact: President: 0181 743 8289 **Secretary:** 0181 399 7848 **Treasurer:** 0181 241 5881

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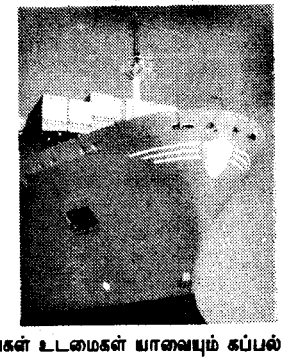

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COMPETITIVE FARES TO COLOMBO, MADRAS, TRICHY, TRIVANDRUM SINGAPORE (WITH STOP IN COLOMBO), **AUSTRALIA** (WITH STOP IN COLOMBO) **& MALE**

ON

Kuwait Airways

Airlanka

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ALL MAJOR CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED

COMPETITIVE FARES TO OTHER DESTINATIONS AVAILABLE

SHIPPING AIR FREIGHT TRAVEL

TO COLOMBO AND OTHER WORLWIDE DESTINATIONS

PERSONAL EFFECTS, HOUSEHOLD GOODS, VEHICLES AND MACHINERIES

Appointed MAIN AGENT for AIR LANKA

Passenger Tickets & Unaccompanied Baggage

Special low fares to:

MADRAS/TRIVENDRUM/TRICHY	
(No Stop in Colombo)	£ 410
COLOMBO:	
AIR LANKA from	£ 485
GULF	£ 415
KUWAIT	£ 400
EMIRATE	£ 575
ROYAL JORDANIAN	£ 460

Low Unaccompanied Baggage rates to COLOMBO:

Sea Freight ---- £ 9.00 per Tea Chest
---- £ 2.00 per cu. ft.

Air Freight ---- £ 30.00 per 10 Kg.
(£ 1.50 for additional Kg.)

MADRAS ---- £ 1.50 per Kg.
TRIVENDRUM ---- £ 1.80 per Kg.

YOUR GOODS GO TO OUR BONDED WAREHOUSE IN COLOMBO

GLEN CARRIERS LIMITED

14 Allied Way, off Warple Way, Acton, London W3 0RQ
Telephone: 0181-740 8379 : 0181-749 0595
Fax: 0181-740 4229 Telex: 929657 GLENCA G

TRICO INTERNATIONAL (SHIPPING) LTD

TRICO SHIPPING SCHEDULE

YOUR GOODS MUST BE AT OUR WAREHOUSE 5 WORKING DAYS BEFORE DEPARTURE

Vessel Name	Closing Date	Sailing	Arrival
H/Le Havre	22/04	27/04	14/05
H/Long Beach	06/05	11/05	28/05
H/Kaohsiung	20/05	25/05	11/06

We offer you the same service from the following destinations

USA
Trico Shipping – 87-15 65th Street H2J, Jamaica Estate, New York 11432 USA
Tel. 526 0649

AUSTRALIA
Unit 8, 24-26 Carrick, Tullamarine, Victoria 3043
Tel. 631 3388 5978

Our modern warehouse and offices are under one roof with ample car parking facilities where our customers have the extra benefit of packing their goods themselves with our assistance.

We offer a friendly and professional service at competitive rates. Once your goods are in our hands, we guarantee a safe and efficient delivery to your destination. We also offer FREE STORAGE to our customers for a period of ONE MONTH in our bonded warehouse in Colombo.

THE LEADING SRI LANKAN SHIPPING AND FREIGHT FORWARDING COMPANY IN THE UK

AIR FREIGHT TWICE A WEEK (Wednesday & Sunday)

Trico International Shipping Ltd
Unit 4,Building 'C'The Business Centre at Wood Green, Clarendon Rd,London N22 6XJ
Tel: 0181-888 8787 Fax: 0181 889 5445

UNIWEST INTERNATIONAL

30 Friern Barnet Road,
London N11 1NA
Tel : 0181-361 5087 / 4937
0181-368 9544
Fax : 0181-361 8498

All goods are lodged in a modern, fully computerised. Bonded warehouse (outside the Port)
Ceylon Shipping Lines, 294/10 D.R. Wijewardena Mawatha, Colombo 10. Tel: 432994/5

WE ARE STILL THE BEST & CHEAPEST

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£7.50 PER TEA CHEST TO COLOMBO

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Ship Your CAR in a Container for £795 + Insurance
Our Colombo Office Warehouse is Staffed by 2 Experienced Officers to Ensure Personal Attention and Speedy Clearance of Your Goods

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